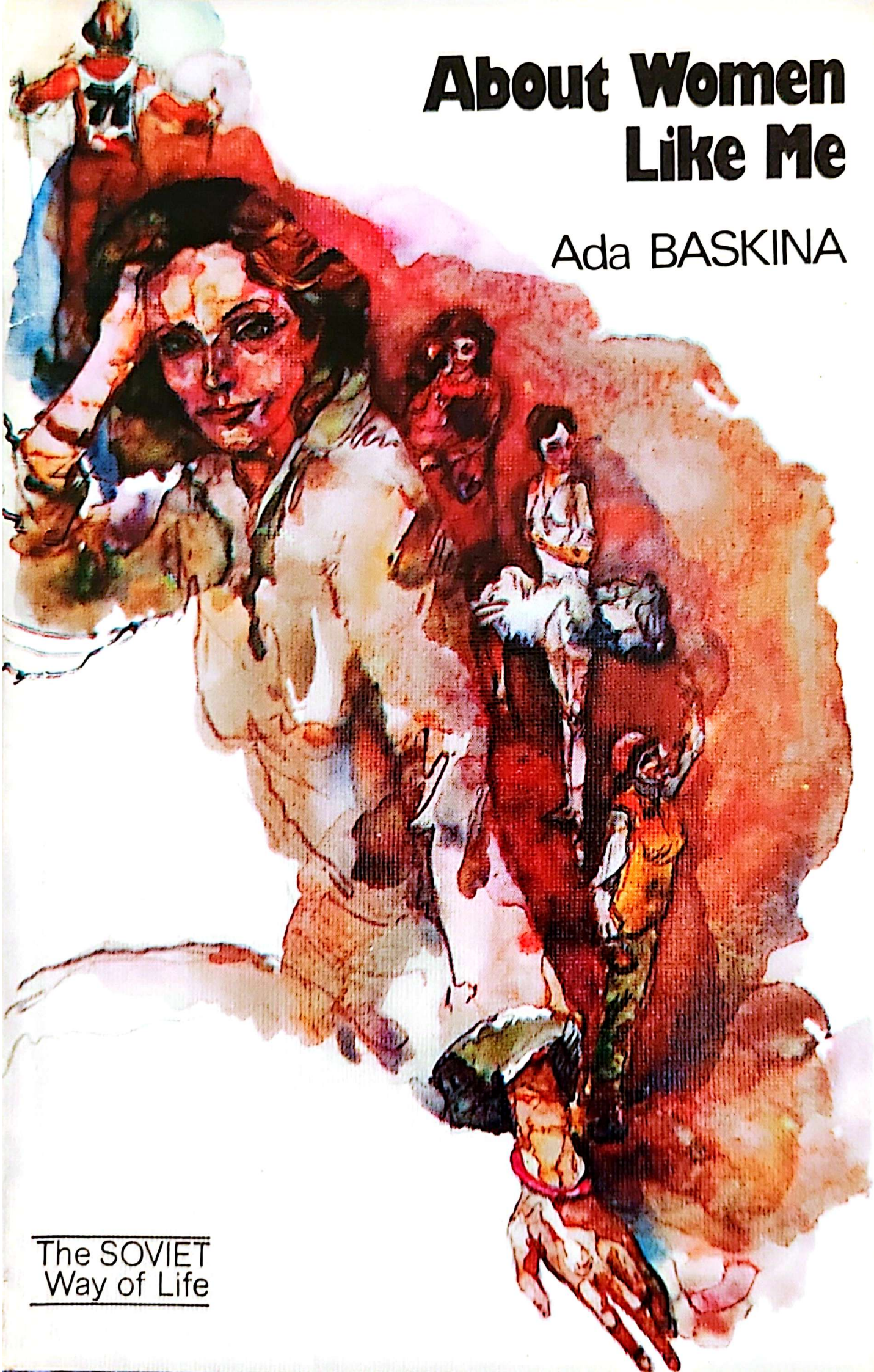
About Women Like Me

Ada BASKINA



The SOVIET Way of Life

Ada BASKINA

About Women Like Me

Public and Private Life in the USSR

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WOMEN'S EQUALITY DE JURE AND DE FACTO

(By way of a preface)

In 1908 the Russian journal *Vestnik Vospitaniya* (Educational Herald) wrote that it would take Russia nothing less than 280 years to wipe out illiteracy among women. Socialism achieved the goal in twenty years: by the late thirties illiteracy had practically been eliminated in the USSR. The journal, of course, had every reason to make such an estimate: according to the census of 1897, half of Russia's townswomen and almost every country woman could not read or write. All they knew was how to put a mark on a document if a signature was required. The same census established that tsarist Russia had only four women engineers; more than half of all working women were employed as maids and charwomen; a quarter worked on landowners' estates in return for beggarly wages; 13 per cent worked in industry and on building sites; and only four per cent were employed in education and public health.

Nearly one hundred years ago Nikolai Chernyshevsky, a Russian revolutionary-democrat, wrote: "With what clear, strong and just mental vision woman is endowed by nature! And yet it remains useless to society, which rejects it, crashes it, stifles it. If this were not the case, if her mind were not

compressed, if such a great quantity of moral power were not destroyed, humanity would progress ten times more rapidly". For centuries the creative potential of one half of mankind had been suppressed.

The first decrees of Soviet power proclaimed equality of women and men in society and the family. The law granted them equal rights to work, education and participation in the country's economic and socio-political life; equality in matrimonial relations, in choosing place of residence and family name after marriage, and equal property rights.

However, a law remains a mere declaration if it is not enforced by social guarantees. Moreover, there is such a thing as centuries-long customs and traditions which cannot be overcome at once by even the fairest of laws.

The working woman of the early twenties had no professional skill, no education. It was hard for her to establish herself in social life and in the national economy, for skills and knowledge could be obtained only through years of effort. But this is where the socialist principle that every citizen has a right to work and where the system of state and party measures protected the unskilled and often illiterate woman from losing her job. She worked and gradually the image of her as an independent and equal member of society grew. Great changes took place in the character of women's labour. Giving her more responsibility, it raised her social status. It was exceedingly difficult for her when she was an unskilled worker to take part in government. The present role of the Soviet woman in her country's political life is the result of her development as an individual. The post-revolutionary changes–the elimination of social inequality, and the

elevation of education to a priority in state policy–set off an educational boom, and particularly among women. This boom has never stopped. Soviet women now account for more than half of all specialists with a higher or secondary special education. Their desire for knowledge is evidence of a definite social trend: they are not seeking knowledge for its own sake, but, first and foremost, as a means for finding their place in public life.

One third of all deputies in the USSR Supreme Soviet are women. There are women deputy chairmen of the Councils of Ministers of Union Republics and women ministers; women are managers of industrial enterprises and directors of research institutions.

Every third Soviet engineer is a woman. In France only one out of fifty engineers is a woman and in the USA only one out of a hundred. Four out of every five Soviet doctors are women, in France the figure is one out of every ten and in the USA, one out of every thirty. Nearly 100,000 Soviet women have degrees of doctors or candidates of sciences. Over 2,000 women are full or corresponding members of Academies of Sciences or hold professorships in higher educational establishments.

Regardless of where they work, Soviet women are paid equal wages with men. This accounts for their equal status in society, at work and in the family.

One's educational level means a lot in terms of self-confidence and place in life. Women's social activity taken by itself does not ensure their social equality nor their development as individuals. It is the possibility of following a profession as an equal member of society that makes women equal with men and allows them to play a significant role in the affairs of state.

Norton T. Dodge, an American sociologist who studied women's labour in the USSR, wrote: "Perhaps even more distinctive than the high overall participation rate of Soviet women, and the vital role they play in the older age groups of the labour force, is their heavy representation in white-collar occupations and the professions. This is the bright side of the employment picture for Soviet women".

A host of difficulties, objective and subjective, had to be overcome before women's equality was finally achieved in the Soviet Union. It is not surprising therefore, that women have no intention of yielding any of their hard-won positions.

An opinion poll carried out by the Institute of Sociological Research of the USSR Academy of Sciences among some 10,000 working women in Moscow, Leningrad, Gorky, Sverdlovsk, and other cities, showed that 93 per cent of the women had no desire to leave their jobs. They said that their work gave them the "opportunity to use their professional knowledge", made them feel that "their work was useful to people" and allowed them to enjoy the "comradely atmosphere of working in a collective". This does not mean that they ignore the money aspect. But when the question: "Would you give up your job if your wages were added to those of your husband?" was put to a number of Moscow women working in industry, 80 per cent of them gave negative replies.

For it is not by bread alone that man lives. He is concerned about his position in society and the attitude to him of the people he lives and works with. In other words, he must have prestige. Woman's social prestige has a direct influence on her associates' attitude to her. A respected woman who is confident of herself naturally carries high authority with her fellow workers, her husband and

her children. She is in the thick of things, in the know of the latest political and cultural events. She has a keener perception of everything new and modern and she makes better contact with the younger generation.

However, woman's new social standing has given rise to new problems. How to cope with her job as well as household tasks? How to see to the children's upbringing and be a good worker? How to maintain the level of her qualifications, given that the scientific and technological revolution calls for a continual refreshing of knowledge? And a question of no less importance: how to preserve charm and keep up with the latest fashion, find time for the hairdresser's and see the latest play at the theatre? All these questions are raised by everyday life and they are not at all simple. They are regularly discussed in the Soviet press. Thousands of scientists, including sociologists, doctors, psychologists, teachers and physiologists, are searching for ways to solve them. Scores of institutions are concerned with women's health. Special commissions have been set up at state level to study women's working and living conditions and to improve mother and child care.

Soviet state policy on the question of women's rights is quite explicit. Article 35 of the USSR Constitution states: "Women and men have equal rights in the USSR. Exercise of these rights is ensured by according women equal access with men to education and vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration, and promotion, and in social and political, and cultural activity, and by special labour and health protection measures for women; by providing conditions enabling mothers to work; by legal protection, and material and moral support for mothers and chil-

dren, including paid leaves and other benefits for expectant mothers and mothers, and gradual reduction of working time for mothers with small children."

It is interesting to note that in the draft of the Constitution the first line of this article ran: "Women in the USSR have equal rights with men". In the course of a nation-wide discussion, the wording was critisized on the grounds that it presented the rights of men as a model for women. The formula given in the Constitution–"Women and men have equal rights in the USSR"–is not only more precise but also views the essence of the matter in an entirely new light.

Such is the general idea of the problem presented in this booklet. The reader will learn how it was and is being solved by looking at concrete examples and learning about the lives of some Soviet women.

ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MEMBER OF GOVERNMENT

Zaira Khizroyeva, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Daghestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic,[1] was born into a peasant family in the small village of Khunzah. Her father had fought for the revolution, known Lenin and helped to establish Soviet power in Daghestan. It had been hard there to do away with the grim legacy of tsarism–the extreme economic and cultural backwardness and the patriarchal-feudal relationships that had been preserved in Daghestan for centuries. The position of women was particularly torturous. Zaira wanted to study, but since the village had no school at the time her parents sent her to town. The neighbours censured the Khizroyevs and began to avoid them.

When I asked Zaira why they did that she replied: "Apparently because human consciousness always lags behind social development. Besides, it had long been hammered into the people of Daghestan that woman was inferior to man".

"The girl will live by herself in town? Sit at one desk with a boy?"–the village was bubbling with

[1] Daghestan is part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, situated in the east of the Northern Caucasus; its capital is Makhachkala.

talk of this kind when Zaira went away to school. But her parents bore it all stoically: the silent disapproval of their fellow villagers, the abuse from their indignant relatives, the gossip that was spread about their daughter.

When Zaira finished school she went to Moscow. She had been particularly good in mathematics at school, and was admitted to the Department of Mechanics and Mathematics at Moscow State University. When she came back home with a diploma the Great Patriotic War against Nazi Germany (1941-1945) had already begun. At the metalworking plant in Buinaksk where Zaira went to work, she was the only employee with a higher education. She was offered the post of director.

"At first I was terribly frightened", Zaira recalled. "I came home and told my mother about the offer which I considered a joke. But she said: "Don't forget that the cause your father and his comrades fought for was to make all people equal, so that women could enjoy the same respect as men. You'd better try your best and show that you have knowledge and character. Show that you're capable of handling a serious job. It is a great honour to be in the front ranks. Don't reject it."

After much hesitation Zaira agreed. It was very difficult at first. She had to cope with a new branch of production along with learning economic management and working with people. She learned how to be fair and exacting, efficient and responsive, how to be competent in matters concerning the plant and bear in mind the interests of the whole people. These qualities brought Zaira Khizroyeva the post of a member of government.

...That day three meetings were held in the spacious office of the Deputy Chairman of the

Council of Ministers of Daghestan. One with members of the Child Care Council, set up on Khizroyeva's initiative, another with the leaders of the Society for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, and the third with the Republic's leading specialists in public education.

This is what I learned from Khizroyeva: "People of more than 30 nationalities live in Daghestan. There are villages where one half of the population speaks one tongue and the other half another. They understand one another only through Russian which is used as a lingua franca by the different nationalities living in the USSR. As in all Soviet republics, tuition in schools is conducted in the national languages (Russian is studied as a separate subject). That is why we are in constant need of teachers from among the local nationalities.

"During the first years of Soviet power we invited teachers from Russia. Then our young people grew up and we had our first national teachers: Avars, Kumiks, Lakhs and representatives of other peoples of Daghestan. Incidentally, three-quarters of our teachers are women, and that is typical of the country as a whole. Still there is a shortage of teachers belonging to our nationalities. A few years ago the republican Council of Ministers introduced new regulations for applicants to teachers' training colleges and departments, granting certain privileges to candidates from rural schools, particularly those in remote mountain districts. Otherwise these young people would have little chance of gaining admission: there are so many people who want a higher education that the entrance exams are quite tough. Even though the curricula are universal for all schools in towns and rural areas, city children are often at an advantage.

"Today we discussed whether this system of

granting some privileges to rural youth has been successful. Well, it seems it has. Now even the most out-of-the-way mountain schools have teachers from among the local nationalities."

That day Zaira Khizroyeva invited me to the opening of the Lakh Drama Theatre which had moved to a new building. The Lakhs are a small people of Daghestan numbering barely 50,000.

Before the revolution Daghestan had no theatres. Now there are five. They give performances in Kumik, Avar, Lakh, Darghin and Russian.

"We send talented young people to study in the drama schools of Moscow, Leningrad and other big cultural centres", Zaira said. "This constantly raises the professional level of actors and producers. Regular festivals of art and literature help new talent to be discovered."

Such festivals are an effective means of cultural exchange between all Soviet peoples. Zaira Khizroyeva personally took part in organizing the Daghestan art and literature festival in Leningrad.

"Our popular *Lezghinka* and *Tsovkra* ensembles and the Daghestan Song and Dance Company performed in the best concert halls of Leningrad", Zaira recalled. "The famous Avar poet Rasul Gamzatov read his verses late into the night in the overcrowded hall of the Leningrad Philharmonic. The exhibition of Daghestan's national crafts displaying hand-made carpets, ceramics and wooden toys, was a great success with the people of Leningrad.

"During the days of the festival the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad also gave the premiére of *The Maid of the Mountains*. Murad Kazhlayev, the Daghestan composer, wrote the music to this ballet based on a poem by Rasul Gamzatov."

...That evening we were sitting in Zaira's cosy flat. Her daughters Aida and Farida were busy cooking the national pilau. Zaira said: "I never had much time to spend with my girls but they are always in my mind no matter what I'm doing, even now, although they're quite grown up: one is a doctor and the other is a philologist."

As I leave the Khizroyevs' house the lights go out in all the windows but one, the window of Zaira's study. Perhaps she is reading the letters she received today from her native Khunzah village? Zaira does not only get letters from her relatives living there but from many other villagers as well, for she is a Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Daghestan Republic from the Khunzah electoral district.

A MILKMAID'S THESIS

Some 40 kilometres from Kostroma, a city on th Volga, there is the Karavayevo cattle breeding farm where the famous Kostroma cow, one of the world' best, was first bred. In 1964, the Kostroma Agri cultural Institute was transferred to Karavayevo and Klavdia Petrova, an assistant professor and former milkmaid, was appointed its prorector.

* * *

"She's there, at the farm", said Muza Belova Karavayevo's senior livestock expert. "You'll re cognize her: a bit on the short side, dark hair and the face of a commoner as they used to say in old days".

I found Klavdia Petrova on the farm among the milkmaids. And her face was that of a country woman, with a frank and straightforward expression.

She showed me the farms and brought me to the farm centre with its new houses and charming public garden. Then we took a turn towards the forest. She wasn't a lively talker and her replies were short and to the point.

I was naturally interested in how she, a milkmaid, managed to become a scientist and prorector of a big institute.

"Personal ability and favourable conditions of life", Klavdia replied without false modesty or affectation. Apparently she was the kind of person that spoke the truth regardless of the impression it would produce. . .

Personal ability was certainly an essential part of her progress. The best milkmaid on the farm, she was one of the first to go over to machine milking and for her high results was awarded the highest labour distinction–the title of Hero of Socialist Labour. She graduated from an evening secondary specialized school with honours and was admitted without exams to the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy in Moscow. One of its best students, she graduated with distinction and was put down for a post-graduate course.

As for favourable conditions of life, that is hardly the truth. She had barely turned twelve when the war broke out. Her father, a state farm worker, left for the front, and a year later was followed by her eldest brother. Besides herself, there were four youngsters in the family. Klavdia helped her mother, worked on the state farm taking in hay from the meadows, and attended evening classes. It wasn't easy but she never complained. She had character!

As a student, she was a member of a scientific circle where she tried to develop a preparation to stimulate the growth of heifers. The experiments continued to fail one after the other. Nearly all the students who worked on the problem gave up, but not Klavdia. She kept on and got what she was after.

A few years later, when she was already a Candidate of Sciences in agriculture, she was offered a place on the staff of the Agricultural Academy or a big research institute. But she decided to go back to the Karavayevo state farm. There was no institute there at the time, only a farm that needed educated workers.

Being a taciturn person Klavdia did not speak much about her personal life to anybody during her years in Moscow. There had been bright moments, like the birth of her son, and grief—the death of her husband. I couldn't help asking: "What did you mean by 'favourable conditions' of your life?" "I didn't say my own life", she corrected me. "There were enough troubles in personal life. I meant the objective conditions of our life which enable one to develop one's abilities and achieve what one has set one's heart on. When I made up my mind to be a livestock expert I entered a specialized school. Teachers came out to the farm where we worked to give consultations and help us with our studies. I was determined to study in the country's best agricultural institute, the Moscow Timiryazev Academy, and I was admitted. I had only my student grant to sustain me, and though it was small at the time (it was raised by 25 per cent only in the seventies), I managed. We didn't have to pay for tuition, and the monthly one rouble for the hostel scarcely counted. Meals were cheap at the student canteen. In the summer I worked on our state farm as a milkmaid. Well, as a postgraduate my grant was as high as a young professional worker's wages: I used half of it for myself and sent the rest to my mother."

"And money isn't the only thing. A research worker needs costly equipment, laboratory room, experimental stations and the chance of taking part

in scientific and practical work. Now, that I am in charge of an institute myself, I can appraise the state's enormous expenses in this sphere, giving students, post-graduates and young specialists free access to all that is essential for their work.

"Now I'm preparing to defend my doctor's thesis. For several months now I've been given official paid leave. My thesis is ready. The subject is a topical one: how to raise the meat productivity of the Kostroma cattle. It is based on hundreds of experiments and years of observations. And it is not only my personal achievement. I have many helpers, practicians and scientists. On our state farm 35 leading women workers have been decorated with orders, 17 are Heroes of Socialist Labour. Muza Belova, our chief livestock expert, is a Candidate of Sciences in agriculture. Anna Kravtsova has just defended her candidate's thesis and Anna Bagina is writing her doctor's thesis."

HOW'S LIFE, RANO!

Four lines from a poem by the Tajik revolutionary poet Lakhuti give a full picture of the life of many generations of Tajik women:

> Fearing God's wrath,
> Oppressed at home,
> Slave to tyranny and blows,
> Dishonoured even by her son.

By some chain of reverse associations I recalled these lines first when I made the acquaintance of Rano Dustmamadova on the shop floor of the Dyushambe textile mill where she is a weaver, and once again when I dropped in on her at her home on Pravda Prospekt. Rano is highly skilled at everything, whether it's slipping a spool into the shuttle of her loom, cooking the national lagman and pilau, or sewing and knitting something for her two little girls.

"How do you cope with everything, Rano? The mill, your home and the children?"

"But I'm not alone", Rano replied and looked at her husband. "Have you forgotten about Gulayoz?"

"Rano and I are interchangeable," joked Gulayoz.

Today this "formula" can easily apply to the life of women in all the Soviet Central Asian republics, although many old people who married in Soviet times still remember the sufferings of the first women who had dared to take off the yashmak, go to school or take a job. The wall of prejudice and humiliating and oppressing customs that had been built for centuries around the Oriental woman could not be pulled down in just a few years. It wasn't easy for the husband to turn from master and tyrant into a friend and helper. But gradually even that wall fell.

. . . Gulayoz preserves all Rano's photos and diplomas and all the newspaper cuttings telling of her achievements. When there are guests Rano's elder daughter usually brings the whole lot into the dining room and proudly gives a commentary for each item: "This is mother's picture that was put up in the 'Leading Workers' Avenue'. Can you recognize her?" "And this is mother in the Kremlin where she received her medal."

"You're lucky, Rano", I said. "How easy everything has been for you".

"Easy, you say?" Rano exclaimed with a slight frown. "No, not easy at all."

. . . Rano was three when the war broke out. Her father left for the front and was killed in action in the very first battles. Soon her mother died. The neighbours lamented: "Yatim-yatim" (orphan). But in Tajik "yatim" is more than an orphan, it means one for whom there can be no future.

Rano's older brothers and sisters were sent to different places and she found herself in a children's home [1] in Garma near Dyushambe.

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[1] State institution for orphans where the children live, study, and go in for artistic and sports activities.

They still remember the bold and witty girl there. She was good-natured and intelligent, a real live-wire in all the games, and an excellent dancer. Everyone expected her to go into ballet. But Rano did not know what she liked best: dancing or making the costumes for her dances.

"We were quite many, children who had lost their parents," Rano recalled. "We lived like one big family and at first I liked it very much."

When the war ended some children were fortunate to be reunited with their parents. It was then that Rano realized that she had no parents, no home. Bilan Azizova, a doctor who had four years' experience at the front, who had performed hundreds of operations in the heat of battles and knew the meaning of human suffering, was manager of the home. This wise and courageous woman understood the child who had suddenly discovered that she was all alone in the world. Azizova was determined to help Rano and, luckily enough, in a few months' time she managed to find the girl's elder sister who came and took Rano home with her.

The sister's husband was a collective farmer and they were rather well off. They had a house of their own, a plot of land and a well-managed household. Rano helped her sister in the house and the garden. When the summer holidays were over Rano's sister was against her going to school. "You know how to read and write", she said. "What more do you need? Grow up and we'll find you a husband." Rano smiled stiffly and said nothing. There were frequent quarrels. Her sister would cry: "The girl must learn to manage the household and take care of the children... I don't need a learned sister but someone who can help me in the house." Rano kept her temper and tried to convince her

sister that there was no life for her without school, books and people.

One day, coming back from some errand, Rano saw a familiar figure near the house. She recognized the short hair and the khaki-coloured blouse made from a soldier's shirt. It was Bilan! The girl rushed into the arms of her friend, the manager of the children's home, and poured out her heart.

"Rano, would you like to come back?" Bilan asked.

Tears streaming down her cheeks, Rano gratefully nodded. Thus she learned another truth: the kinship of souls is sometimes stronger than a blood relationship.

After completing eight years of schooling, Rano and her classmates had to choose between staying on and finishing secondary school, or going to a vocational school and starting work. A group of weavers from the Dyushambe textile mill who had been brought up in the same children's home came to the end-of-term evening affair. The girls were captivated by the guests' pretty clothes and cheerful disposition. And when the weavers told them about their work and showed them samples of the pretty textiles produced at their mill most of the girls had no doubts as to what they would do. That evening decided the fate of many of Rano's friends.

"Well, and after that, didn't everything go smoothly?" I asked Rano.

"Does everything go smoothly in real life?" Rano replied. "My classmates were tall and strong, and I was so small and thin and still had some weeks to go before I would be sixteen[1]. I was told to come back the following year.

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[1] Soviet labour legislation prohibits the employment of adolescents under 16. Exceptions are made with the consent of the TU and medical commission.

"I cried for two days and then went straight to the manager of the mill. And there I suddenly exploded with a phrase from a play in which I had once acted at school: 'It's either life or death!' The manager looked at my tragic expression and smiled. 'All right, it's life' ", he said.

In the Dustmamadov family album there are several snapshots of a girl wearing a Young Pioneer tie. Her eyes are dreamy and impish at the same time. An inscription on one of the photos reads: "Gulayoz, don't forget our friendship". Rano and Gulayoz had made friends in the children's home. It was surprising what this lively, witty girl found in the quiet boy, and what serious and silent Gulayoz saw in the high-spirited Rano. They enjoyed each other's company. He found pleasure in bringing her a new book. She was happy to embroider him a handkerchief with his initials. Was that love? They never spoke the word, either because they were too young or because they were restrained by Eastern modesty.

They grew up. Rano went to work at the mill. Gulayoz was called up for military service. She was lonely at first, then made new friends and, as time passed, she decided there was nothing serious in her childish, semi-love, semi-friendship affair.

Rano developed a passion for her weaving job. While studying at the factory school she would often go to the mill's finishing shop and wonder whether she would ever be able to weave such splendid sateen and cotton prints. And when she first saw a working loom she was truly frightened that she would never make head or tail of the whole thing.

Maria Mazanova, an elderly weaver, came up to her and said: "Being afraid won't get you anywhere". She showed Rano how to work the loom.

The experienced weaver kept her eye on the girl, corrected her mistakes and shared her know-how. One day she said to Vitaly Kuznetsov, their team leader: "That little girl has talent. Look how she listens to the humming of the loom, she treats it as a living creature. And how deft she is. Quick and capable. Let's leave her in our team. She'll make a good weaver some day."

Rano did not hear them speak and thought herself the clumsiest person on earth. She was given two looms to begin with.

Maria Mazanova spared neither time nor effort to teach Rano the art of weaving, making her feel the loom's faults and develop a steady working pace. Rano learned to work carefully and rhythmically. When he checked her looms several times during the shift, Vitaly Kuznetsov always had an encouraging word for the girl. In a month Rano was able to work four looms. Soon she was operating eight, then 16 and finally 24. She became a leading weaver and was awarded a medal of the National Economic Exhibition and a gold watch for mastering the production of a new type of fabric.

It was then that she met Nurmamed, a student of philology. He was tall and handsome, and had blond wavy hair. Rano liked him at first sight, and when he proposed to her a month later she agreed to marry him. Rano was still very young. Vitaly Kuznetsov, her team leader, tried to talk her out of the hasty decision and Maria Mazanova, her guide, advised her not to hurry. "Why are you giving up your freedom so easily?" she would ask Rano. And her friends with whom she had grown up in the home looked at her with reproach for forgetting Gulayoz. However, they too could not help admiring Nurmamed, he was so merry and

handsome. And Rano's heart leaped with joy: "He has chosen me from among all the others", she would say to herself.

After the wedding, Rano and Nurmamed moved into a room of their own in a new house. Rano's team leader asked her severely: "You're not quitting school, are you?" "Oh, no", she exclaimed, shocked at the very idea: all the newcomers to the mill had had ten years of schooling while she had completed only eight.

Nurmamed, however, was far from enthusiastic about his wife's evening classes. He began by trying to persuade her to leave school. One day he put away her bag and books and forbade her to attend classes. This was their first serious conflict. The first but not the last. Rano's worries grew and so did her responsibilities. She gave birth to a daughter–Gulra–and it became even more difficult for her to work and study. There was no understanding between Rano and her husband. The marriage simply did not work.

One day Rano rushed home in great excitement. "They're sending me to Moscow," she exclaimed. "To the meeting of leading workers that will be held in the Kremlin!" "You're not going anywhere," snapped her husband. There was no understanding or support on his part. But Rano was not alone. Her team helped her out. In the factory committee she was told that, during her absence, she could place little Gulra in a first-class boarding nursery school in Luchob, a picturesque suburb of Dyushambe. Her friends promised to visit the girl as often as possible. Nurmamed, on the other hand, warned Rano that if she insisted on going to Moscow he would consider himself free of all obligations to his wife and child.

For two days Rano was not herself. The first All-Union Conference of Workers of Communist Labour was no trifling matter. And yet she did not want to break up her home. However, on the third day she packed her things, took Gulra to Luchob and bought a ticket to Moscow.

In the capital the Tajik delegation was welcomed by a cheering crowd of workers and students. The delegates were taken by special buses to the hotel *Moskva,* the capital's best. They arrived there singing songs and, from the very first minute, Rano felt as free and easy as in her childhood.

The conference in the Kremlin was extremely interesting. Workers of almost every speciality and from every part of the country spoke of how they were working to become workers of communist labour. Rano got the main point: only those achieved high production results who developed a creative attitude to their work and were always searching for ways of improving it. Rano thought about herself: she operated 24 looms, saved time on each operation and had no rejects; she shared her experience with several newcomers and had often helped other members of her team. She found she had no reason to reprove herself: she had worked as well as the others. Nevertheless she was astounded when her name was called out among those who were awarded medals for labour feats. She could not get over her surprise.

At home the situation was complex. Nurmamed, an educated man, refused to recognize his wife's rights in the family, and ignored her interests and views. Life became unbearable when Rano returned home. She began to suffer from insomnia and realized that she could not go on like that. Then she made up her mind: she was independent and enjoyed respect at the mill, she would bring up her

daughter without her husband. Her memory took her back to the happy days at the children's home, the friendship she had almost forgotten...

Rano filed for divorce. Nearly half of the mill's workers attended the hearing. The opinion was firmly held that there could not be happiness in the family if the husband had no respect for his wife.

Time went by. Rano was highly valued at the mill. She was elected Komsomol organizer of her shop. Things were going fine. In her mailbox one day she found a letter. Her fingers trembled as she tore it open. Her old friend Gulayoz wrote that he had learned of her misfortune, that he had never ceased loving her and that if she only agreed, then he would be happy to make her his wife and Gulra his daughter.

The mill gave the newlyweds a two-room flat. This was the beginning of a new life for Rano.

Soon Rano Dustmamadova was elected deputy of the city Soviet and was as busy as never before. Together with the other deputies she saw to the city's needs, controlling the work of the service industry for the city and individual enterprises and dealing with many other problems. People came to her with their troubles and she had a kind word for all. Her untiring efforts helped people move into new flats, place their children in kindergartens, etc.

* * *

"How's life, Rano?"

"Fine!" Rano said and gave me a confident smile. "We have remarkable people, they're always ready to help, to share your joy or your sorrow. I know that from experience and I'm always glad now when I can help others."

FORMULAS AND MUSES

She came bringing with her a small bouquet. "Hotel rooms are usually so cheerless," she said. "And a woman always misses beauty."

Refined features, finely-shaped eyebrows, graceful movements, elegant clothes, an easy but reserved manner—such was my first impression of Maria Sagaidak, Candidate of Sciences in Physics and Mathematics and senior lecturer at the Kishinev University.[1] As we talk, my companion shows evidence of a keen mind and a wide education. Her intellectual charm is all the more impressive because I know that she is of peasant stock.

"My parents are farmers. They live in the Moldavian village of Verkhniye Kugureshty where I spent the first 18 years of my life," is how Maria begins the story of her life.

* * *

A mathematics lesson in the village school. The young teacher, just out of university, divides the class into groups: brighter pupils are given more complicated problems, others do simpler tasks.

[1] Kishinev is the capital of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (Moldavia). Like all Moldavian establishments of higher education, the University was founded in Soviet times.

The thin lively girl at the front desk receives one of the most difficult problems. A few moments later, when everyone is still busy writing, she is already fidgeting in her seat. "Marchella, sit still and do your problem!"–"I've already finished."–"All right, come up to me after school," says the somewhat puzzled teacher.

Maria (Marchella is what she is called at home and by friends) was a bright pupil in all subjects, not only in mathematics. But she could "collect" a mark of two as easily as one of ten. [1] Assiduity was something quite beyond her. She could spend hours over a book or run off to the forest. In summer, her legs were all scars and scratches for she was fond of climbing trees. Yet she could stand enraptured watching the play of light and shade among the trees or marvel at the abundance of different greens in the foliage. A keen feeling for beauty came to her there in the forest of her childhood. As a grown woman, she discovered the Baltic dunes and recalled the rapture experienced in her childhood:

"For the first time I saw the new landscape–the white sand, the pines on the brink of the sea, the heavy waves. But the delight was just like the one I had felt in my native forest."

Maria's childhood coincided with the grim post-war period. [2] The once prosperous collective farm

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[1] 10 was then the highest mark in Moldavian schools.

[2] During the war of 1941-1945, Moldavia had been occupied by German troops. More than 110,000 Moldavians were shot, burned, buried alive or driven to Germany. (Altogether the Soviet Union lost 20,000,000 people in the war.) The economic damage Moldavia suffered amounted to 11,000 million roubles. All its towns and cities lay in ruins. There was no water or electricity and no transport. There was an acute shortage of food and housing.

was ravaged to such an extent that everything had to be started from scratch. There was a shortage of manpower, machines and grain. The village could not satisfy the requirements of the town and, in turn, the latter did not have enough manufactured goods for the village.

In those years, children grew up quickly although they could not fully grasp the hardships that had befallen them and did not give them much thought. Like other children of her age, Marchella enjoyed life. She liked to play games with the boys. Frisky as a colt and quick as lightning, she always came out the winner in all the "war games". Her lithe, romping figure, all knees and elbows, could be seen at every village holiday where the favourite dance was the Moldavian *jok.* Late into the night youths and girls span in the round dance, one fiery circle inside the other. There was hardly a step in any dance that Marchella didn't know but she was not old enough to be admitted into the "circle" so she used to dance by herself and felt none the worse for it.

But Marchella could also be sad. When, for instance, her mother gave a deep sigh and said: "What will become of you, Marchella? Study, my child, you must study!" Marchella knew the meaning of these sighs. As a girl, her mother had dreamed of becoming a doctor or at least a nurse. But her father, a peasant of modest means, would express surprise at his daughter's whims: why should a girl study, if there is extra money isn't it wiser to buy more land? Since her youth, Marchella's mother had retained her love for reading and had a passionate desire to give her daughter an education.

Marchella was sorry to see her mother unhappy, but she was also well aware that times had changed

and that nothing could keep anyone from studying. With a ten-year schooling you could enter any higher educational establishment and qualify for any profession you chose. You needed only the motivation and the ability, there were no longer material or any other obstructions. Marchella knew all this, but continued to worry her parents by her thoughtlessness: she did not know what she wanted to be and was far from diligent at school.

And then the day came when the mathematics teacher said that she must come up to him after lessons. He was the first to see the gifted pupil's inclinations and to convince her that she was capable of making good headway in mathematics. A year later Marchella made up her mind: she would become a mathematician like her teacher.

The self-willed girl could not be forced to do anything against her wishes. It was quite another thing when there was something she cared for. She finished school with a gold medal [1] and entered the Department of Physics and Mathematics at Kishinev University.

* * *

The city brought Marchella a host of new impressions. In the USSR all schools, whether they are in city or rural areas, have uniform curricula. Nevertheless, Maria felt there were gaps in her development. She had read much but indiscriminately. She had gone regularly to film shows but had never been to the theatre. She had collected repro-

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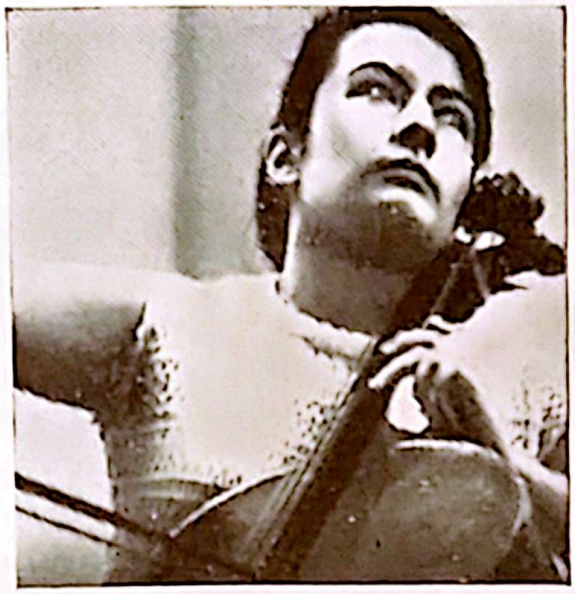
[1] The gold medal is awarded to the best pupils on finishing the last, tenth, year of school.

Three wonders have robbed me of peace
And this for ever:
The Earth, and the sky and woman—the third wonder.
Three secrets have fettered my thoughts
And trouble my mind:
The Earth, and the sky and woman—the third secret.

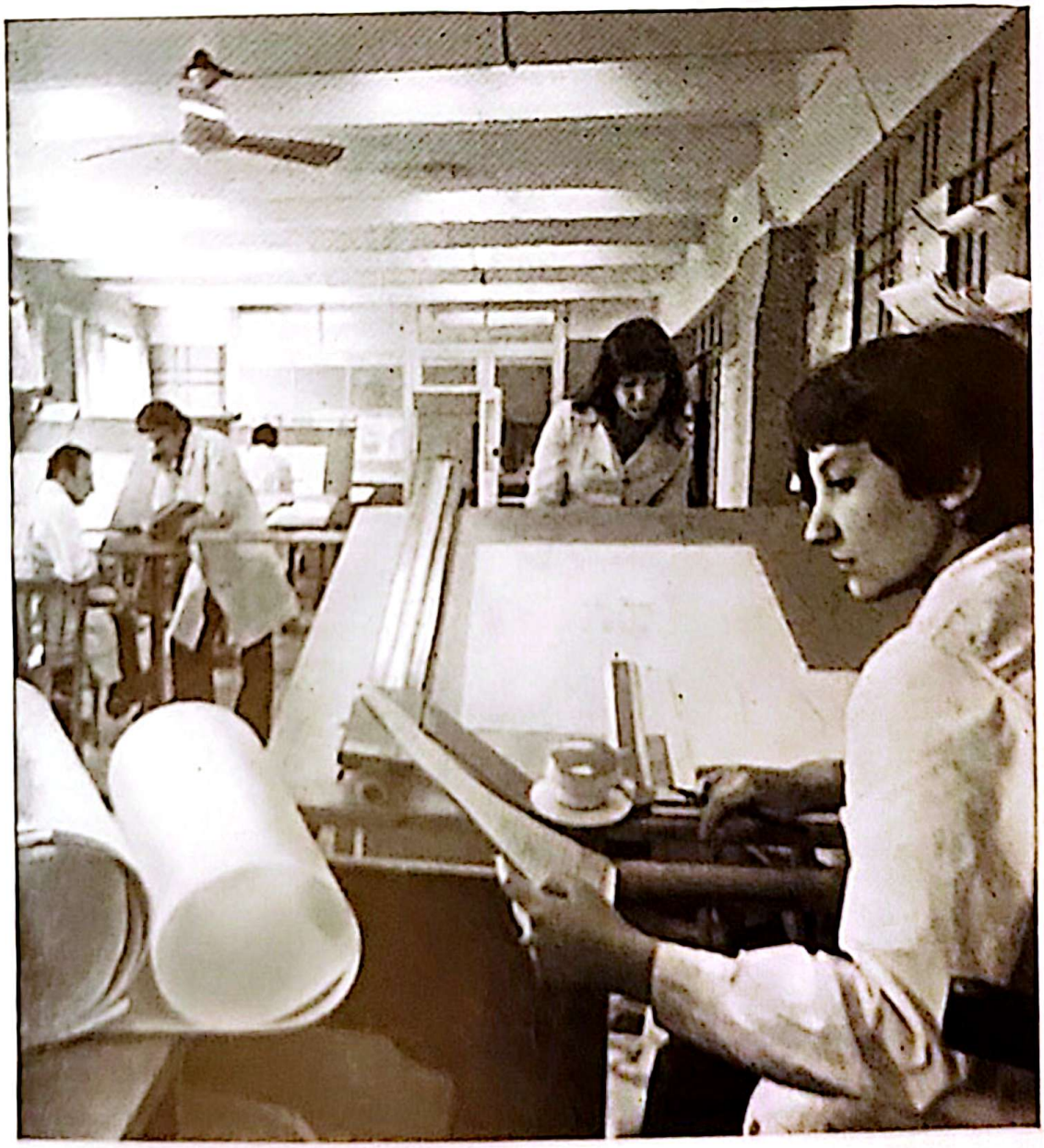
Mustai KARIM, Bashkir poet.

What is the contemporary Soviet woman like? The answer can be found in this book and these photos: in the USSR every third engineer and lawyer and every second technician and designer is a woman, and three out of every four doctors and teachers are women.



Read about Maria Sagaidak, scientist and film actress (right). Probably you know Lana Gogoberidze, a film director, for her films that have been shown in many countries. And everyone surely knows Maya Cheburdanidze, the 18-year old student who won the women's world chess championship in 1978.

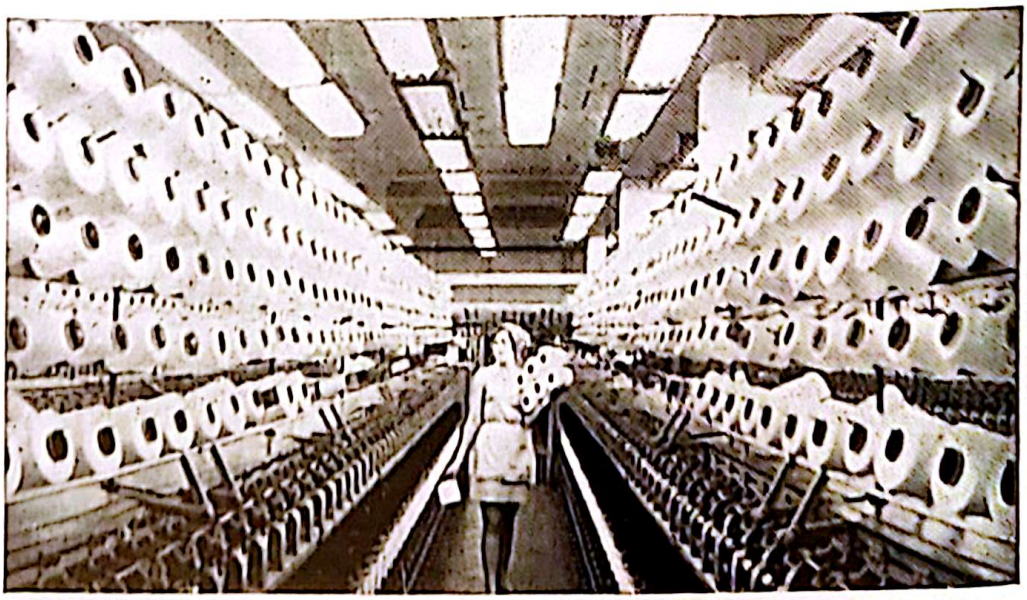
The life of each of these women is a story in itself. This is especially true of Prof. Alla Bukrinskaya (below left). She has been with the Ivanovsky Institute of Virology for 23 years. Over 240 of her research papers have been published in the Soviet and foreign press and 50 of them in US, British and French journals.



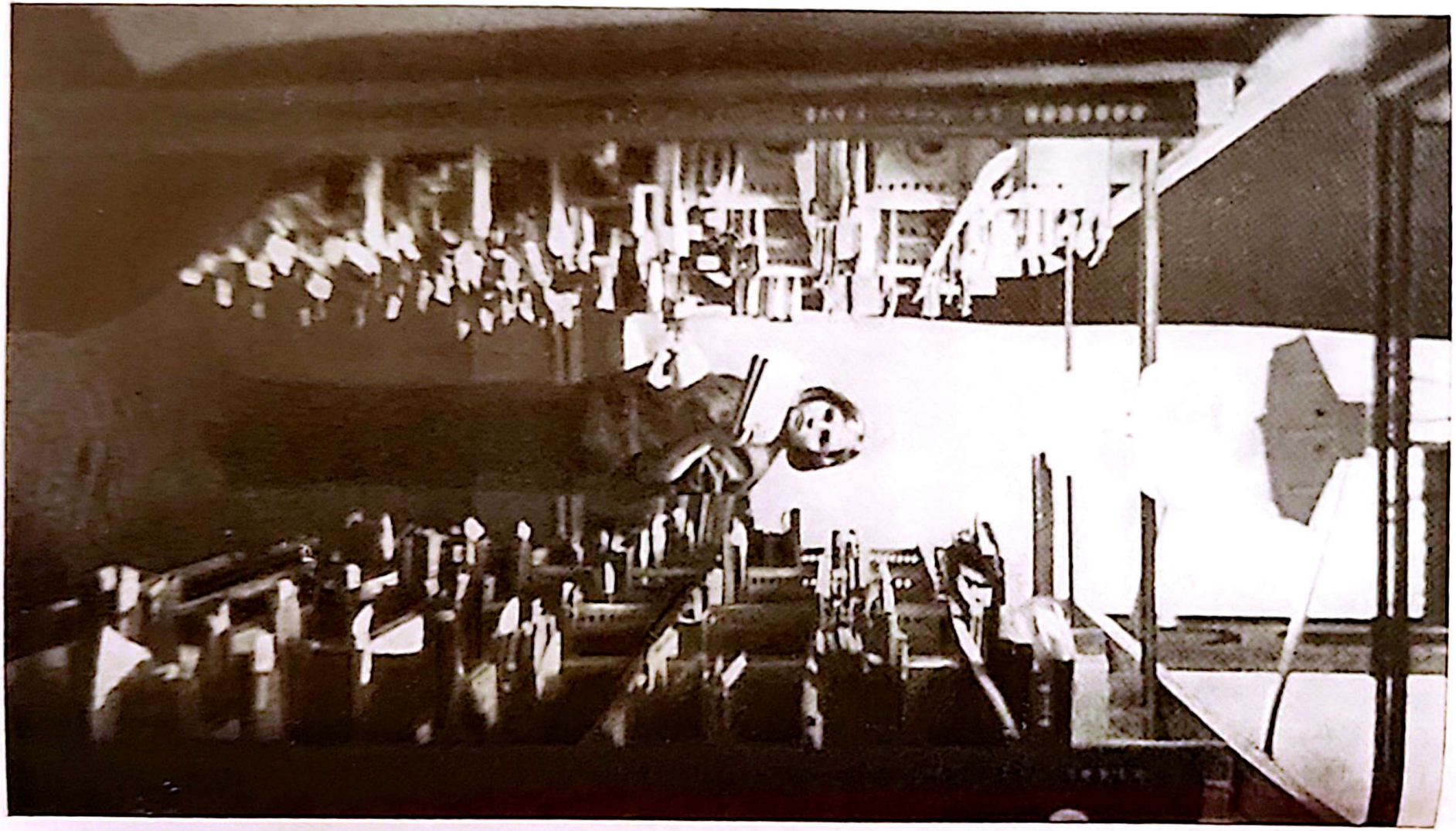
Woman, the giver of life. Mankind is grateful to her for this noble mission.

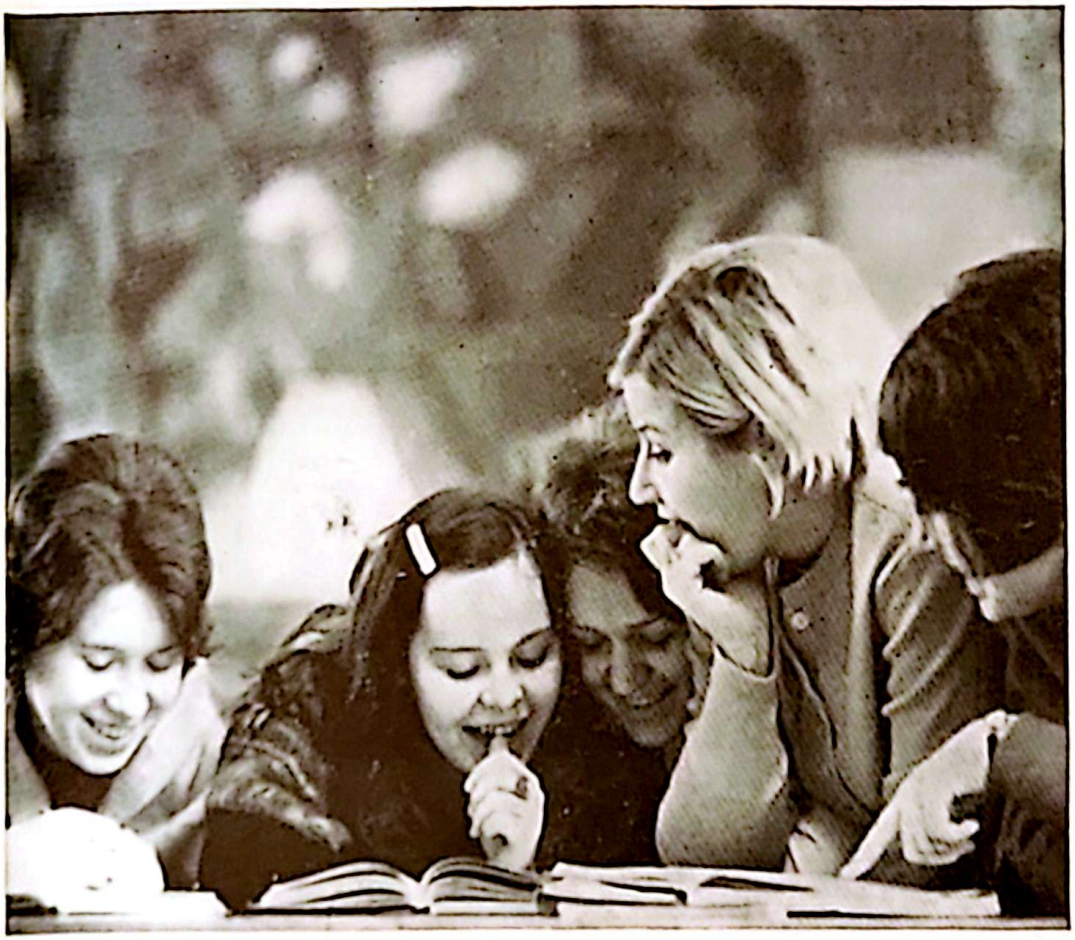
A happy marriage, love, parental duties—are all endless problems that are viewed from different angles at different ages.

Although household appliances now play an important part in our everyday life (more than 5 million refrigerators were sold in 1977 alone) husbands are not too eager to do household chores. Married women still spend more time on housework than men.



What is better—to be a ballet dancer, or a stage designer, or to work at a plant? This is something one can argue about. Up-to-date technology, the scientific organization of labour; and the high level of education among industrial workers now make industrial professions as attractive as the arts.





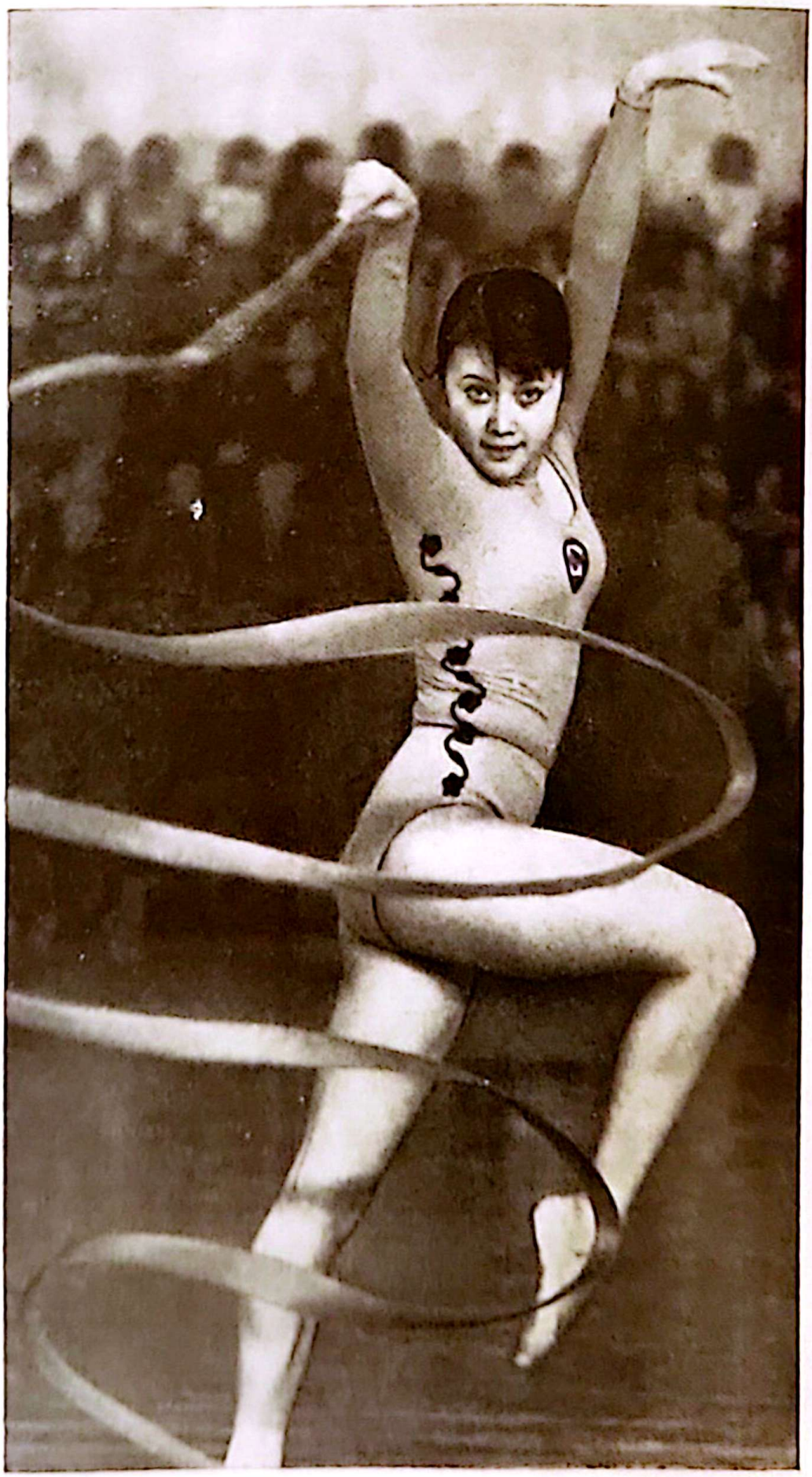
Sociological data show that young women are more avid readers than young men. They are becoming ever more keen on subjects like philosophy, which have always been considered a man's privilege. An example to this effect is Prof. Muzifa Gafarova, D. Sc. (Philosophy) from Dyushambe, who is shown here with her students.

Woman's natural energy has made her an active participant in public affairs. It goes without saying that there are not many Valentina Tereshkovas (right) and Zaira Khizroyevas (above). Nevertheless, figures speak for themselves: 475 women have been elected to the USSR Supreme Soviet where they make up one third of all deputies. This exceeds the number of women in the parliaments of all capitalist countries taken together.

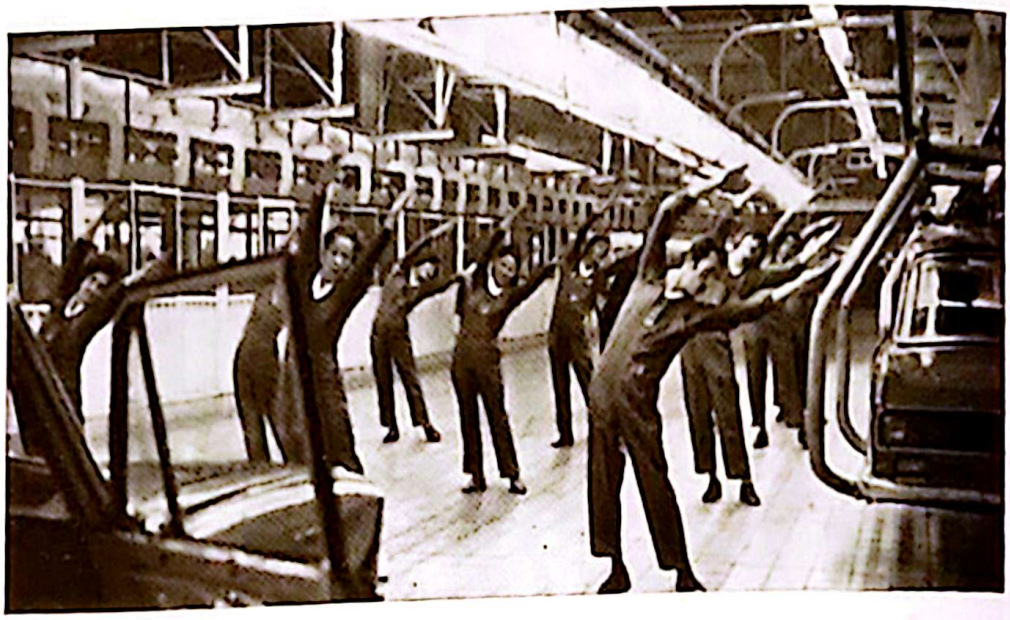
Our readers abroad often ask: "Is there such a thing as a generation gap in your country?" There are, in fact, no grounds for such a conflict. Argu-

ments do not extend to matters of principle since both the younger and older generations have common goals and ideals.

There are always many young women among those who visit concerts, the theatre, museums and libraries. The impression is that they outnumber the young men attending these establishments. Perhaps they're trying to make up for what women had been deprived of for centuries?



Sport. Soviet women are highly proficient in all fields—from track-and-field athletics and modern gymnastics to flying and parachuting.



Concern for women's health is state policy. The Soviet Union has a special system of mother and child care. There are women's clinics in all Soviet towns.

Holidays are the time to stay at the seaside or to go on a tour with your friends or family.

ductions of masterpieces but had never seen the originals. And Maria gave herself up to her new, compelling interests.

She attended piano concerts and lost her heart to the Luchaferul (Morning Star) Drama Theatre with its young actors and interesting repertoire. The students of the Mathematics and Physics Department were regular theatre-goers and had many friends among the actors. Sometimes Maria wondered if she should have a go on the stage. One of her new friends, Emil Lotyanu, then a young film director and now a leading figure in the Soviet film industry, suggested that she take part in the work of an amateur youth studio. Maria arrived in the middle of a rehearsal when the young people were trying to act out the following sketch suggested by Lotyanu: "Imagine that you've just made a parachute jump—portray your feelings." Maria was suddenly attacked by a fit of laughter. She could not control herself and Lotyanu asked her to leave (he would get even with her one day).

Maria's third passion was gymnastics. As already mentioned, if Maria was keen on something she put all her zeal into it. She received a first-class rating and was already on the verge of entering the class of master of sport. Then came her first love and her first disillusionment. Maria learned what it meant to suffer. She made a critical review of her past and gave serious thought to her future life, her plans and aspirations.

Among the new publications in mathematics that Maria was devouring at the time was a monograph by the Academician Lev Pontryagin, a world famous Soviet scientist. She was carried away by the author's scientific intuition, his vast knowledge and strict logic. She read all his books and adopted one of his methods for her first independent re-

search work. Pontryagin became a model for her. She dreamt of meeting him one day.

She had to wait only three years for her dream to come true. As a university graduate, Maria Sagaidak was sent with a group of research workers on the staff of the Moldavian Academy of Sciences to Moscow where she was to take a special course in the Department of Differential Games at the Steklov Institute of Mathematics. Academician Lev Pontryagin was head of the department.

A creative atmosphere prevailed in the Department. Bold hypotheses were set forth at the weekly seminars, sharp disputes took place and reports of the results were later published in national and international journals. Maria was attracted by the atmosphere, the style of work, the constructive rivalry in solving problems and the method of tackling ideas and tasks collectively. It was true that she could not vie with eminent scientists: she lacked experience and confidence, and had to broaden her outlook and increase her knowledge. Gradually this began to wound her self-esteem. And when her adviser offered to take her on as a post-graduate student she willingly agreed.

* * *

"A lady is bathing in a round lake. Suddenly she sees a monster on the shore. It wants to seize the lady. It moves faster but it can move only in a straight line. Its victim moves slower but she can easily change her course. How must the lady move to evade the monster? The problem is expressed quite easily by means of formulas. There are several solutions but one must choose the optimal variant. Is it clear now?"

This was her third attempt to explain to me the essence of her research and of the course of lectures

she read at the University–Methods of Optimizing Management. To begin with she gave me her latest paper entitled "The Necessary Optimum Conditions in Optimization with a Mini-Maxi Criterion". I honestly read half a page and saw that it was useless: it was like reading a foreign language. For the second time Maria tried to show me the practical significance of this mathematical problem. "A rocket travelling in outer space has to be landed on an interplanetary station. Using methods of optimization it is possible to find the best way this task can be accomplished within the shortest possible time."

Finally we arrived at the classical example from the sphere of differential games about the lady and the monster.

Strange as it may seem, I finally began to see some sense in the whole thing. When I listened to her lecture at the University I became convinced that in the exact sciences I was not as thick-headed as I had thought myself to be. I knew that before each lecture she would sit late into the night selecting new problems and graphic examples and that she was also working on a text-book dealing with the subject of her course of lectures. Sitting in the audience I noticed students show an obvious interest in the lecture. Maria was able to judge the audience, her explanations were precise and to the point and there were no signs of fatigue in her face. But when I met her on her way out, she reminded me of a tired child. She began to grumble at the schedule–six hours of lecturing in one day–then stopped short: "Well, this is nothing, as long as they have an interest."

That was her chief concern. She kept coming back to it again and again in her eternal search for "optimization methods" in teaching students.

* * *

There is only one woman in the Chair of Mathematics at Kishinev University. But taking into consideration the large number of girl students, Maria Sagaidak will not be alone for long.

"A specialist must be absorbed in his profession, all serious distractions are dangerous," she says.

"And what about films?"

"Films don't distract me. I'm fond of the turmoil on the set. I love to be in a collective that is fused together by a common effort. There I don't have to check myself and can give vent to my feelings. I remember Emil Lotyanu going into a rage and shouting: 'You're a computer, a dry formula! You had no business laughing at my rehearsals!' I burst into tears but I was happy. Films are a wonderful rest after mathematics."

The reader is probably mystified by all this talk about films, for the heroine of our sketch is a scientist. The point is that Maria Sagaidak is also a well-known film actress.

And this is how it all began. Film director Emil Lotyanu was shooting *The Instant*, a film about Moldavians who were in the international brigades fighting in Spain during the Civil War. The leading role called for an actress who was both lively and intelligent, both emotional and subdued. "Just like you, Marchella," Lotyanu said, to which Maria's husband Eugene, a medical research worker, replied jokingly: "I already have a learned wife, now all I need is a wife who's an actress too." This only shows what a joke can lead to.

Lotyanu was making his film in Kaliningrad, on the Baltic coast. He invited Maria and Eugene to come there during their holidays. It was there that Maria first saw the dunes, the sea and the pines.

Lotyanu watched her in this new environment, away from her formulas, calculations and computers. His efforts were not in vain: fascinated by the role she agreed to his proposal.

When her mentor saw her in *The Instant* he was terribly upset: "Why did I waste my time on you?" he exclaimed. "Oh no, I'll never drop mathematics," Maria reassured him.

By the time Maria defended her thesis she had played leading roles in three films. Mathematics, however, remained her life-work, her true calling.

Maria Sagaidak has already made ten films. She receives invitations from several film studios but turns them down if the shooting takes place during the school year and she cannot leave her students. She sincerely does not understand the reasons for her success with film directors–there are actresses that are more beautiful and more talented. Well, it's probably the type of woman she is that is now in great demand: an intellectual who keeps pace with the times.

Maria is fond of Vivaldi, Mendelssohn, and Grieg and keeps track of developments in modern art.

"What characteristic do you value most in people?"

"Intellect. Innate intellect. When I visit my native Verkhniye Kugureshty I can spend hours talking to our old people. Some of them are really wise."

OLD KUZA'S TALENT

What is talent? Some say talent means outstanding abilities, a gift for doing something. Others hold that talent is a feature of human nature that can show itself quite unexpectedly, regardless of one's sphere of activity. In other words, beside talented actors, writers, or scientists there are simply talented people. And they can display their talents in a seemingly ordinary sphere of daily life.

Kuza Kumakhova, a peasant woman from the Kabardin [1] village Lesken II, is known for her boundless kindness and energy. This illiterate woman who can barely sign her name has brought up five children that anyone would be more than proud of.

Bashir and Tosya are Candidates of Sciences in agriculture, Mukhadin has a doctor's degree in philology, Muradin is a research worker on the staff of the Institute of Nuclear Physics attached to Moscow State University, and Anyusya is a teacher.

One may not see anything special in this fact. In the USSR education is free and the system of

[1] The Kabardin-Balkar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (capital—Nalchik) is situated in the Caucasus and is part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

state student grants gives everyone access to education at all levels. So it is not surprising when a cleaner's daughter becomes a neurosurgeon or the son of a shepherd turns out to be an aircraft designer. There is no denying that people's lives are influenced first of all by the social conditions of life, the existing laws of social relations.

Yet Kumakhova's life has been more than difficult. This simple peasant woman's efforts to overcome the vicissitudes of fate, and her ability to cultivate in her children the loftiest human qualities testify to a great talent that merits every respect.

Two farewells

The oldest child, Bashir, was 18 when his father left for the front to defend the country from the invading Nazi army. He still remembers the look in his father's eyes as he stood there before his family, the two daughters and four sons, the youngest only 18 months old. He gave them all a farewell kiss and came up to their mother.

"Kuza," he said and fell silent. What could he say? They had lived together for nearly twenty years and could easily read each other's thoughts. And they did not need words now: how would she manage alone? It's true she had a strong character. And then, with anguish in his heart and little hope in his voice he said: "The children must study. . . Do your best."

It's what father bequeathed

A year later Bashir also left for the front.

"I remember how we recruits got onto a cart they had ready for us near the Village Soviet. All

the mothers were crying and clutching their sons' sleeves. Only mine stood still as if paralyzed. And then I saw the pain and desperation in her eyes. I almost shouted: 'Cry, mother, cry, don't keep your tears back. Cry like the others!'

"And then we were off. All began waving their hands, but she suddenly dashed after the cart. She kept on running, the horse picked up speed and she, too, ran faster. I began to shout: 'Mother, stop, don't run, don't!' But she went on and on, falling, getting up and running. And then I couldn't stand it any longer. I broke down and cried, a big fellow like me."

After Bashir went away Mukhadin was the eldest in the family. He was in the eighth form then and his teachers predicted a great future for him. He had a remarkable memory, an exceptional knack for languages and a fierce desire for knowledge.

Quite often when mother would sit mending clothes she would ask him to tell her what he had learned at school that day. And he would tell her about history, and literature and biology in a way that she was able to understand. She always listened carefully. There were many things that she could not grasp but she never showed it. And not because she was ashamed of doing so in front of her children but, because those evening talks were very dear to her.

"Now that I think of it," Mukhadin recalled, "mother was not as interested in all we were studying as she wanted us to believe. This was done to keep up our desire to tell her about it. I even remember how I took special books from the library to give her a fuller account of what we were studying. The main thing is that she implanted in us a desire to increase our knowledge."

Mukhadin liked to study, he enjoyed the process of learning, perusing books, solving problems, learning poetry. But he had become the family's eldest, so he made up his mind to provide for them. And he went to work in the collective farm. That evening his mother rushed home from work, her hair flying, breathless from running too fast. She flew at her son: "Is it true, you went to work?"

"Yes, mother."

"But why? I can manage by myself. By all means tell them tomorrow that you won't be able to keep the job."

That night Mukhadin did not sleep. He would be only too glad to go back to school. But at once he could imagine his mother cooking, sewing, washing, hoeing the garden, working in the fields. No, he had no right to study.

In the morning he told her he was going to school, and went to work, thinking she would not know. But she found out.

"Do you think you're being kind to me, son? No, you're killing me. You think life will be easier for me if you work, but what will I have to live for then? My children are my life. And they must study like father wanted them to."

"Mother, let the younger ones study. I must help you. You won't be able to bear such a burden by yourself."

"The main thing is to feel good at heart. Then even the heaviest burden will seem light. And if you, with your wonderful abilities, drop your studies, I'll say to myself: you've grown old, Kuza, and now you're good for nothing. If you don't want to make me sad go back to school. As long as I live all my children will study."

And they studied and couldn't do otherwise.

Anyusya and Tosya, with only a year's difference between them, entered the first form together. That was their mother's idea and she had a reason for it. Anyusya, her first daughter, was much too shy and timid, but Tosya was full of life and was certainly one to stand up for herself.

"And I stood up for myself and for Anyusya," Tosya recalled. "We were great friends. I would do my lessons quickly and help my sister—not all the subjects came easily to her. Oh, mother was a wise one to send us to school together. She couldn't check our homework herself so she would ask me to look through Anyusya's work to see if there were any mistakes. Anyusya's exercise books were always very neat but there were lots of mistakes. With me it was the other way around: I rarely made mistakes but I could leave my homework unfinished and be off to play games in the street. So mother would ask Anyusya to see if I had done everything. Anyusya would discover that I, for instance, had done only three instead of four problems, but would say nothing to mother.

"Mother soon caught on to that and asked us what we were up to.

" 'You can fool me and you can fool the teacher but you won't fool yourselves. School will be over and then what? What will people learn from you? Who will need you? Old people will ask you to explain something, youngsters will come to you with questions and what will you tell them? I, an illiterate person, have no need for someone who is ignorant. An educated person is going to feel that all the more.' "

"No, we weren't ashamed," Tosya recalled, "we were suddenly frightened by the idea that we could grow up ignorant and useless. It's funny when you

think of it now, but after that conversation we began to study better, we became more diligent."

Kuza Kumakhova had enough cares and troubles. And yet she felt she had to be pleased with her life. The letters from her husband were kind and tender, her children were healthy and made good progress. That is why there was always a peace about Kuza, she had a kind smile for everyone and rarely raised her voice.

Her neighbours would ask: "Well, Kuza, your children will complete their education, and then what?"

"They'll go out into life," she replied, "I won't keep them to myself."

"And what about you—you'll stay all by yourself?"

"Oh, why look so far ahead! I'm not a clucking hen that keeps her chicks under her wing. I'm a human being and I want my children to be real people."

"And what do you mean by 'real'?"

"I mean that they should respect others and be respected."

"And for what?"

"For their knowledge. For their desire to lead a full life and that does not mean making money. For earning their keep honestly, by using their hands and knowledge."

And then came the "killed in action" letter. And there was that terrible heart-rending cry... And the woman who had been happy a moment before, now withered, looking older and smaller than they had ever seen her. Her eyes were blind with grief. There would be no more joy, no laughter.

Then she saw the terrified, weeping children. They needed her. She would have to live on. They

would have success, they would have joys and, perhaps, someday she would smile again.

A mother's heart

The war was over and Bashir came home. "Now, mother, things will be easier for you," he said, and went to work.

To go to work Bashir had to skirt a river that ran close to his house: it was a kilometre's walk to a small bridge. It was, in fact, little more than a stream, narrow and shallow, that anyone could wade across. Only by the time you took off your boots and then put them back on again, you would lose as much time as by walking around it. One day, coming home from work, Bashir stopped in his tracks–a passage made of boulders lay across the river.

"Your mother is a treasure," his neighbours said to him. "All day long she carried the boulders to the river saying: 'Now my son won't have to walk so far, it'll take him less time to get home.'"

She was happy that her son was finally home... but one day he saw sorrow in her eyes.

"What do you think of doing, son?"

"I'll work and help you, mother."

"And what about going on with your studies?"

"Oh mother, have pity on yourself. Didn't you work hard enough during the war? At least now you can rest a bit." Kuza shook her head.

One can only guess as to who would have got the upper hand, for Bashir was as obstinate as his mother. But at that time the regional Party Committee offered to send Bashir to study at a Party school. And grudgingly he agreed.

With Mukhadin mother also held her own when he finished school with flying colours. "But how will you manage without Bashir and me, mother?" he asked. She smiled back, "Don't worry, I'm still going strong, I'll manage."

Of course, the two elder brothers knew it would be hard for her, but they never thought things would turn out as badly as they did. Muayed, their youngest brother who was in a boarding school in Nalchik, fell gravely ill.

For eight months Kuza did not leave his bedside. For eight long months—day and night—she kept vigil over the sick child, feeling with every cell of her body that his life was ebbing away. She set her hopes on medicine, then cursed its helplessness, then again began to believe in it. And then took the child, hopeless as he was, home, and miraculously prolonged his life for another year.

When Bashir and Mukhadin came to the funeral they hardly recognized their mother. She was only fifty and looked like an old woman. Her former vitality, her bustling activity, the merry sparkle in her eyes—all was gone. She could hardly shuffle her feet, her eyes were lifeless and she no longer cried—she had no tears left. The younger children watched her with fear. The older ones suffered because they could not help her.

A week passed, then another. One day the brothers were busy discussing who would go back to the city to study and who would stay with mother. Suddenly the door burst open. "You'll both go, and that's that," said Kuza in a weak voice. Her sons shook their heads: How could they leave her in such a state?

But hers was an exceptional nature and it helped her to rise above her grief, her depression and the strong desire to give herself up to her misery and

cease to take an interest in the present. For Kuza realized that if she wanted her children to be educated, if she wanted her late husband's dream, the dream that had long become hers as well, to come true, she would have to make another sacrifice, the greatest of all she had already made, and she mustered all her strength.

In a few days she was bustling around the house as before, taking an interest in the children's homework, scolding them for carelessly hung clothes or a missing button. Their minds at peace, Bashir and Mukhadin went back to their studies. Only many years later did they understand what it had cost their mother to take hold of herself at the time.

Kuza was respected in the village because her elder sons studied. But when it was rumoured that the girls, too, would go on with their education in the city opinion split. The younger people approved this step: times had changed and Kabardin women should no longer be confined to housekeeping and the family; let them try their hand at science! The old people grumbled: of course, women's emancipation meant progress, they could understand all that. But for unmarried village girls to be living alone in the city—that was something unheard of in Lesken.

"Aren't you afraid for your daughters, Kuza?" they asked.

"I know my daughters and I needn't worry about them," she replied firmly.

Both girls entered the University. One went to study in the Biology Department, the other, in the Department of Philology. They lived in a hostel and received monthly student grants.

Mukhadin moved from Tbilisi to Moscow. After University he became a post-graduate at the Institute of Linguistics attached to the USSR Academy of

Sciences. Bashir was also completing the Higher Party School in Moscow.

Only Muradin, the youngest, stayed home with mother. Life in general had become easier and her older children took care that their brother had everything he needed.

They remembered their father's behest: to take care of one another. "Hold on to each other like fingers on the hand and you will be strong," he used to say. Mother also saw to it that the children were close to each other. The older ones would look after the youngsters and help them with their studies. As soon as they began working, they sent money home. Muradin often received books and textbooks from his brothers and sisters. He was keen on reading and he not only read but studied every book. As he grew up he used to ask more and more frequently for books on philosophy.

He was expected to study in the Department of Philosophy. One day Mukhadin, who always kept an eye on his brother's progress, sent him something quite different–"Nuclear Physics". And Muradin, with his analytical mind and bent for the complicated, immediately fell upon the new subject. The passion proved lasting. On finishing school, he passed the entrance exams to Moscow University and, upon graduation, was recommended for postgraduate study. "Six learned people in the family," mother would exclaim happily (Mukhadin's wife and Tosya's husband had also defended their Candidates' theses). But suddenly Muradin declined the postgraduate offer: it turned out that the chair's research plan did not include the one subject he had become interested in since his third year at the University. So the young physicist went to work in the Institute of Nuclear Physics.

"I'm sorry it turned out that way for you," said Kuza when he came home for the holidays. She had been distressed by the news.

"A degree is not an end in itself, mother," replied Muradin. "What matters is to discover something new, to have one's own say in science."

There was little that Kuza understood from his answer. But her older children showed their agreement: "He is our family's biggest talent, and he has a great future. . ." And she felt she did not have to worry.

Visiting Kuza

Today Lesken II is a well-appointed settlement. Behind the dense hedges one sees good houses mostly of brick. There is a club and a school and the streets are clean and wide. I came up to one of the gates, entered the front garden and walked to the orchard behind a neat brick house.

An old woman, a bit plump but still full of agility, appeared from among the trees. Shading her eyes with her hand, she came up to me and, putting her arm around my shoulders, led me into the house. And there, while we waited for an interpreter, she continued to speak to me in Kabardinian. There was warmth and sympathy in her voice and a familiar tenderness and anxiety in her eyes. That is how a mother looks when her child comes home after a long absence, when she wants to know if the child is hungry, or cold, or has any troubles. This mother whom I was meeting for the first time sat there stroking my hair and treating me to some delicious food that she had quickly collected.

Then the interpreter came and we began our long talk. She came from a family where there were

ten children and which was probably the poorest in the whole village. Could one think of learning to read and write when there were so many mouths to feed? And when the daughters grew up another problem arose: how to marry them off without a dowry?

But youth does not give in to worry and Kuza sang songs, danced folk dances with the village lads and played the concertina. She was such a good musician (in Kabarda this is a women's art) that they began to invite her to play at weddings. There she met Abubekir.

It was love at first sight but they could not marry. Abubekir was just as poor: no cattle, no horses and no money to pay for his bride. They could only hope for a miracle. And a miracle happened. The revolution broke out in Russia and Soviet power came to the Kabardin-Balkar land.

Different in character and temperament, they lived for twenty years in accord and friendship and their happiness was not marred by a single quarrel. And it was not as if life was generous to them. There was the civil war with its years of devastation, hunger and banditry. Then came the difficult years of building up the collective farms. Together they rejoiced when the farm grew stronger and life began to improve for the farmers.

And then the war, the loss of her husband and her child. She had more than enough to grieve about but she had a strong character and life did not break her. On the contrary, it brought out her remarkable talent, the talent of being a mother. One cannot help marvelling at her shrewdness, her ability to distinguish the essential from the insignificant.

"I taught my children to be honest, to help each other and be useful to other people. Also, I wanted them to look deeper into themselves."

"To look deeper into themselves." This was a translation of her words and I am sorry that I cannot understand Kabardinian, for I feel that in her language their meaning is deeper and more subtle.

It is true that she tried to teach her children discipline and not to give in to vanity and idleness. But she also taught them to concentrate on their thoughts, their inner world, their inclinations and interests. She taught them to use all the wealth that was offered them by their country and to repay its generosity by industrious and purposeful effort.

"Mother, come and live with us, we shall be happy to have you here," her children write in almost every letter.

But she does not want to leave her native land, the land where she has honestly lived and worked for more than 60 years. She is anxious to stay there for the sake of her numerous grandchildren who go there every summer and play in her blossoming orchard with its gentle aroma of young grapevines. Sometimes she forgets how many children she has altogether, for she feels all of them are her children—both her sons and daughters and her grandchildren. For each one of them she is eager to bake soft, fragrant *churek* (bread), for each one she has a caressing pat on the head and into each one's eyes she looks to check whether he possesses all that she values so highly in a person.

HOW MANY PROBLEMS DOES A WOMAN HAVE

How the "Femeya Moldovey" magazine defends its readers' interests

A deliberate oversight

A letter arrived at *Femeya Moldovey* (Moldavian Woman) magazine from a group of workers at a collective farm chemical fertilizer warehouse located several kilometres from the settlement. They complained that they lacked essential services, including a canteen and recreation room. There were five signatures. The magazine sent its reporter without delay. The situation was extraordinary not so much because of the poor conditions, but because women were working with chemicals. This was a severe violation of the labour code which prohibits employment of women in harmful industries.

In the main office of the collective farm where the magazine reporter went she was told by the puzzled members of the collective farm board that there were no women at the warehouse. When she finally got to the mysterious place she found five embarrassed men there. What they had written was the exact truth. But they had signed only their last names which in Moldavian have a single form for both men and women. Apologizing for taking up the reporter's time and trying to justify themselves, they explained what had happened. Their wives subscribed to the magazine and they often heard them speak of how efficiently it helped restore justice,

that it was always attentive to the complaints of its women readers. So they decided to write about their problem and sign only their last names.

The journalist could not refuse help, of course, and the problem was settled. But what makes the magazine so popular?

Femeya Moldovey is a monthly 32-page magazine that comes out in more than 250,000 copies.

This is what Yelena Zhmerenetskaya, its Editor-in-Chief, said about its main objects:

"Who is the woman of today? She is a well educated person, a skilled worker, an investigator and creator. It is our task to help her achieve this level of development. We publish materials on diverse subjects: the conditions of labour in industry, the possibility of raising one's level of qualification and developing creative potential, social activity, etc. Many pages deal with the family, everyday life, and questions of upbringing children. The magazine regularly publishes articles about the republic's outstanding women: leading workers and farmers and talented scientists; women in professions that were once considered purely male, including pilots, conductors, and surgeons. Extremely popular are the columns, "Our Mailbag", "Tracing Unpublished Letters" and "The Editor Replies". This is our direct contact with the reader. We receive 300 to 500 letters a month and answer every one. Our greatest concern is the letters of complaint which are likely to have been prompted by an injustice or a hurt, and we always look into the facts reported in them.

Violation of the law

...A young book-keeper was sent by her collective farm to study in the city. For two years the

farm paid her a monthly allowance. But when she came back after receiving her diploma, the Chairman of the Board refused to take her back: her job had been given to another person.

...A month and a half after taking a job in a factory, a woman went on her maternity leave. The administration refused to pay her wages for four months of work (two before giving birth and two after) to which she was entitled by law.

...An inspection of a rural shop revealed some stock was missing. The saleswoman was discharged. She produced a doctor's certificate showing that she was expecting a child and thus could not be dismissed from work. However, she did not get back her job.

For all the differences between these cases they have one thing in common: law had been violated. The magazine published a special article explaining the violations and saw to it that things were set right: those unlawfully fired got back their jobs, those underpaid got their money. Following a letter from the editorial staff, the Prosecutor of the republic demanded strict punishment for those responsible for the violations and ordered juridical bodies to check the observance of women's labour laws at all of Moldavia's enterprises and collective farms.

More often than not the magazine's interference is not connected with violations of law. For instance D., a woman worker in a glass factory and a mother of two, wrote that both her daughters, one aged three and the other five, had attended kindergarten up to March 1976 when Kishinev was struck by an earthquake and many buildings, and among them that of the glass factory's kindergarten, were damaged. She made arrangements for her older daughter to attend a district kindergarten but there was no

place for her younger one there. She was at a loss what to do. D. asked the factory management to transfer her to a day shift for a neighbour had agreed to look after the girl during the day. She was refused. In her letter to the magazine she wrote that she was fully aware that the management had done nothing illegal, that the question was simply "one of humaneness, and that is something that cannot be legislated."

Galina Prekup who is in charge of the Letters Department considered it her professional and humane duty to help D. In a week's time D. was transferred to a day shift and both her daughters were attending the kindergarten of a neighbouring plant.

The first year

One of the latest issues of *Femeya Moldovey* that I was shown contained a summing up of the discussion on the subject "The First Year on the Job", which had been held at the magazine's editorial office. The editorial staff had invited managers in industry, experienced workers who help train their young colleagues, and principals of vocational schools,[1] to learn how young women workers were received at their first place of work and how they became adapted to the new conditions. However, the speakers began discussing the subject of choosing a career in general. A weaver, an adjuster, a cook, and many others said that in their time they had

[1] Schools where youngsters are trained in one of the worker's trades in addition to receiving knowledge given at general 10-year schools.

chosen their career by chance. The system of professional orientation that has been introduced in schools of late acquaints schoolchildren with different occupations and helps them choose one in keeping with their inclinations and abilities. And this is not easy, bearing in mind that the number of trades and occupations is well over 8,000. It is true that all the young speakers in the discussion were pleased with their jobs but that should be put to the credit of the specialized schools they finished and the worker-tutors at their enterprises. Thunderous applause greeted Vera Odobesku, a team leader of the *Zorile* shoe-making factory and a Hero of Socialist Labour, when she rose to speak. She described the conditions that were offered to new workers: they were placed at the best machine-tools and each one was guided by an experienced worker. Yearly competitions for the best worker in the trade helped them to acquire experience and raise their level of qualification and skill grading as quickly as possible.

But there were other speeches too. A young librarian sent to work in the town of Chadyr-Lunga had to wait six months before she was provided with housing to which she was entitled by law. A cook who had been working for a year complained that she was not allowed to work independently. A teacher who was on her first job proposed that the system of tutors for young workers should be extended to young specialists as well, for the beginner's first year was always difficult regardless of where he worked—whether in a plant, a school, a hospital or a library.

The magazine's outgoing mail contained verbatim reports of the conference for managers in industry and institutions, who would undoubtedly benefit from it in planning their work with new staff.

Opportunities for a career

At 55 women of most professions (for some professions it is earlier) are entitled to a pension. And how do their professional careers develop until then? Women who are ministers, managers, collective-farm chairmen are as commonly found in Moldavia as in other Soviet Republics. However, there are not so many women in middle managerial jobs: team leaders, head agronomists, chief engineers, etc., particularly in the rural areas. The magazine introduced a new column: "Man or Woman? It's the Results that Count!" It carries letters describing incidents when managers hinder the promotion of capable women, considering them unfit for some "men's" jobs.

The meeting that was organized by *Femeya Moldovey* on the subject was opened by the Chairman of the Sergo Ordzhonikidze Collective Farm.

He said, "There are seven women team leaders on our farm and they are our best. Take for instance Maria Iordan, a Hero of Socialist Labour. Thrice I placed her at the head of the slackest teams and each time she turned them into leading ones. Our young women attend machine-operator's courses on the farm itself and are paid monthly allowances while they study. Today, among our combine and tractor operators and the operators of our livestock complex there are seventy women.

The Rector of the Kishinev Agricultural Institute complained that few young women applied for enrollment in the Engineering Department, although all its graduates made good progress as farm managers and engineers.

Nevertheless, the promotion of women to leading posts is not only a psychological problem but also one that is connected with everyday life.

"I have five women team leaders", says Vladimir Martynov, a young collective-farm chairman, "and I can't get any more women to take the job. All of them have the same problem: children, the family, the household. Our Board decided to take measures to lighten our women's burden. The seasonal kindergarten which worked only in spring and summer now operates all year round. A new canteen and laundry have been opened."

There is no denying that equality of men and women does not embrace all spheres of life. Women naturally give more of their time to household duties and the upbringing of children. To help them in this respect means to give them additional opportunities for professional development.

How the shop was closed

The column dealing with working conditions of women regularly receives information from enterprises employing chiefly women. The opening up of a new shop, the introduction of up-to-date machine-tools, the furnishing of recreation rooms—and *Femeya Moldovey* immediately reports this to its readers. Sometimes, however, it receives information of a different kind. For instance, the workers of a dairy farm write that they continue to milk and feed the cows by hand while the new machines and equipment are kept under lock and key. Before this information is put in type the magazine sends its correspondent to check the facts. Before leaving the farm, he makes certain the milking and other machines are being assembled.

The magazine learns of shortcomings in conditions of women's labour not only from letters. A "swoop"

on the fancy-goods weaving factory in Orgeyevo was headed by Maria Zakharova, the magazine's assistant Editor-in-Chief. She made a round of all the shops and took note of all the minor shortcomings. She was almost through with the inspection when she entered the last shop and was stopped short by acrid fumes. The workers explained that it was the new bleach and that, in order to air the shop, they had to keep on opening the doors. Because of the draughts many women caught colds. Maria Zakharova went to the chief engineer and studied the relevant documents. She discovered that the technical regulations concerning the new chemical had not been observed: a more powerful ventilation system and a special airing programme were needed. Then came the talk with the manager. "What do you expect me to do? Close the shop? Close down the factory? You, journalists, only know how to criticize. You wouldn't think of helping out!" the manager fumed. "We'll see about that!" was all the journalist replied.

She wrote directly to Galina Zhitnyuk, Moldavia's Minister of Light Industry. A former weaver herself, the Minister sent a special commission to check labour conditions at the factory. The shop was closed for re-equipment.

Children come first

Stella Nikutse, a young journalist on the staff of *Femeya Moldovey*, has two children. Both attend kindergarten. Maybe that is one of the reasons why she was charged with organizing the discussion on the best kindergarten. The best means not merely having good food and lots of toys but developing

the children's abilities, teaching them to draw and model and make things, recite verses and sing songs.

Journalists, writers and actors visit the kindergartens and bring the children presents. All this is the pleasant side of Stella Nikutse's work. But she has other responsibilities as well: to find out why the building of a new kindergarten has been delayed or why the building work is based on old plans when new ones have already been drawn up.

The editorial staff keeps an eye on all that concerns children: Do the fruit preserves for children taste nice? Are the knitwear suits for tots well designed? Are children's books illustrated well enough? Do children really enjoy themselves in the children's playgrounds?

Well-known writers write on how to bring up children and on parent-child relations in every issue of the magazine. The interests of the child are always placed above everything else.

For example, a young man writes asking for advice: a girl whom he loved married another man, and the marriage ended in divorce. She has a child and he wants to marry her. In her reply to the letter Anna Lupan, a well-known Moldavian writer, turns the young man's attention to paternal duties towards the child: is he ready to be responsible for the child? Is he capable of loving another man's child?

Human relations and especially family relations are a highly sensitive sphere that calls for great tact on the part of those involved.

For instance, a mother complains of her schoolgirl daughter, saying that she has neglected her studies, comes home late, and has taken up smoking. The daughter admits to the magazine reporter that she does all this to spite her mother who has been

plaguing her with petty control, admonitions and prohibitions, although she is almost seventeen. Refraining from expressing any categorical opinion, the editor invites readers to give their opinion on the subject. Their replies are published in every issue.

Among other items discussed in *Femeya Moldovey* there are the traditional columns on fashions, cookery, hair styles, cosmetics, and medical advice.

ENTERING UPON LIFE

A sociological experiment

In 1913 Pavel Kolotinsky, a Russian psychologist, staged a sociological experiment in one of Krasnodar's women's secondary schools (gymnasiums). Girls who had just turned 17 or 18 were asked to write a composition containing answers to a few simple questions. The material gave the psychologist a rather full picture of the inner world and moral make-up of young women who were entering life on the eve of the First World War, four years before the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia.

Nearly 60 years went by and Irina Gurova, Candidate of Sciences (sociology) repeated the experiment in Krasnodar.[1] Girls in the 10th form of Secondary School No. 36 were asked the same questions: to name their favourite literary hero, their favourite heroes from the past and present, their motto for life, their hobby and what they would like to have most of all.

Thus, the Soviet sociologist was able to draw a parallel between two different generations. Without going too far into the subtleties of sociological ana-

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[1] Centre of the Krasnodar Region in the south of European Russia. Population 519,000.

lysis let us discuss some of the main distinctions between the young people's criteria in life and see what contemporary youth wants from it.

The present generation of young women is more widely-read than the daughters of the aristocracy, landlords and merchants who studied in the tsarist gymnasiums. They gave many more names of favourite writers, poets and scientists, both Russian and foreign—107 against 67 named in 1913.

Among the heroes of classical literature and history who had won their hearts and influenced the formation of their outlooks and characters, all the contemporaries named selfless champions of justice, progress, peace and a better life for mankind. The 1913 list gave a rather motley picture that included Peter I, Jesus Christ, Napoleon Bonaparte, Buddha, Henry IV and Petrarch, Sappho and Cleopatra. The present generation has a definite set of values: they give preference to those who dedicate their lives to scientific progress, people's happiness and to building and defending a just social system. Among the names they have given there are Spartacus and the Gadfly, Giordano Bruno and Victor Hugo's Gavroche; Karl Marx, and, of course, Lenin. One girl wrote: "Lenin wins one's heart by his steadfastness, humaneness and simplicity, and by his belief in people. He teaches me to have faith in people and to live for people." And here is an excerpt from another composition: "Lenin's personality is the most deserving model for one to follow. His genius, and extraordinary will-power had a great impact on social development and our age as a whole. He was a man of exceptional humanity."

Among the heroines Soviet young women give preference to revolutionaries, such as Sofia Perovskaya, Nadezhda Krupskaya and Alexandra Kollontai. Deep respect is shown to women scientists, and

among them, Sofia Kovalevskaya and Maria Sklodowska-Curie.

Interesting changes have taken place in the evaluation of human virtues. Intelligence and will-power, the features that were valued above all by the pre-revolutionary generation, have been supplemented by honesty, humaneness and conscience. "A harmony of intelligence, will-power and love for people makes up man's true inner beauty". "Love for people should not be the 'all-forgiving' love in the Christian sense of the word, but love in its earthly meaning: it should come out against all that is bad, and turn one into a champion of a better life for people." One can observe that intelligence and will-power are valued when they are used to man's benefit, and honesty is considered a virtue in its civic meaning, when man "is answerable for everything on earth" and not in the narrow sense of the word.

Kolotinsky's question on one's motto for life revealed: "To enjoy oneself", "To use all the pleasures afforded to youth", "Everything or nothing", "The object justifies the means", "To live for joy". And here are the mottoes of the present generation: "If I live for myself alone, then why do I live," "One for all and all for one", "To burn and not to smoulder," "We succeed only in that for which we are ready to give up our lives!" "A human being should be entirely beautiful: the face, the clothes, the mind, the thoughts" (Anton Chekhov), "Be master of your will and a slave of your conscience", "Man must live his life so as to feel no torturing regrets for wasted years" (Nikolai Ostrovsky). Purely individual and egoistic principles have given way to principles with profound social content.

There is also a radical difference between their views on the purpose and meaning of life. "Life

is without meaning", every fourth pupil of the gymnasium wrote. "To be of use to people and bring them happiness", "To bring people comfort and joy", "What you do may not be outstanding, but it must give people warmth", "To do away with all diseases on earth–physical and moral", were the present-day guidelines.

There was often a note of sadness in replies of the past generation to questions concerning plans for the future: "I want to be an engineer, but unfortunately it is not a woman's profession"; "I would like to be a scientist but the higher school is closed to girls".

But what confidence in their future one hears from Soviet girls: "I am certain that I'll be whatever I'll make up my mind to be"; "I would like to work in a research institution dealing with nuclear physics, electronics and astronomy"; I haven't chosen my profession yet but I am sure that it will involve creative work"; "If I don't enter the institute I'll take a job at the plant. This is not the worst one can do, for work brings experience".

As for "What would you like to have most of all?", not a single contemporary girl wished for a rich husband or material wealth. Preference was given to extensive knowledge, talent and good friends, a profession to one's liking, etc.

Thus one observes an entirely new ratio existing between material and spiritual values. And among seventeen-year-old Soviet young women leaving school, spiritual values come first.

Another point of study was the girls' attitude to their parents. The past generation wrote: "Parents, and especially the mother, must sacrifice themselves for their children. Children must reckon with their parents' tastes and wishes as long as they are able

to, must always show respect for them and be grateful for all they have done".

These views were typical of those times. Every fourth girl maintained that parents were obliged to sacrifice their interests for the sake of their children, to support them and provide for all their needs. Nevertheless, many reproaches were heaped upon parents for failing "to understand their children" and "to find a proper approach to them".

Eight out of every ten of our contemporaries wrote: "I love and respect my parents very much", and "Relations between parents and children are based on mutual respect, honesty and love". As for the parents' duties, the Soviet 17-year-olds wrote only of their moral aspect. They rejected the idea of parents sacrificing their interests for the children's sake as well as the old-fashioned formula that children "should not take notice of their parents' faults". On the contrary, they wrote that "Respect is given only to people who are worthy of it". They are against making a fetish out of family relationships. Parents are one's "senior friends" and their authority is based on anything but a blind sense of kinship: they must win their children's respect by what and how they do.

Of course conflicts do arise between children and parents. But they are usually of a private nature and due to excessive conservatism in the parents' tastes and habits, and the children's much too emphatic defense of their views.

A dispute on life

I wanted to go on with the sociological experiment carried out in Krasnodar in order to see and hear for myself what my young contemporaries

thought of their future and with what values they were entering life.

On my request, the form teachers asked the girls from the two top classes to stay behind after lessons on Saturday.

"Girls," I said, "in three months' time you will receive your school leaver's certificates. You will begin independent lives to which you have probably given much thought. How do you imagine your future, what do you expect from life?"

This started off a dispute that went on for more than three hours. The girls spoke of work and its creative aspects, of the family, children, leisure and friends. One can hardly enumerate all the subjects that were discussed. Here are a few excerpts from what I heard that day:

Work

Katya Shabelskaya: The main thing is to live one's life in a way that will bring people joy. I want to be a building engineer like my mother. Each time one of "her houses" is ready I come to look at the people who are moving into new flats. If you could only see how happy they look!

Larisa Kolomatskaya: I was still in kindergarten when I dreamed of working in a hospital. I'm going to try for a medical college. If I fail the first time I'll go to a training school and become a nurse. But the dream of being a doctor will always be with me.

Olya Novoshinskaya: Today ecology is the most useful science for mankind. And I want to dedicate myself to it.

"Well, I see that all of you intend to acquire a profession. And everyone links her future with

work. But have you ever thought of why work is necessary?"

There was an immediate and noisy response, laughter and then the exclamation: "But what do you mean?" "How can one live without working?"

Irina Lenner: I have never thought of that before. But I can say that in our country work is valued above everything else. The working people enjoy the greatest respect. And it is natural that none of us wants to be an outsider.

Alla Krasnopyorova: And not simply an outsider, but one doing nothing useful for society.

Katya Shabelskaya: Why, you can simply die of boredom if you don't work! How can it be otherwise: everyone is working, doing something useful and you're outside all that! Why that's as if one of us should suddenly get up now and walk out. How can one be outside a collective?

Galya Sarana: But a collective is not something you have only at your place of work. A family is also a collective. We shall soon be adults and have our own children. . .

Katya Shabelskaya: But a person must be useful to society!

Galya Sarana: But surely society will benefit if you bring up your children properly? If they grow up to be real humanists, patriots, and internationalists?

Svetlana Nyrtsova: Girls, you're much too abstract. I think you've all forgotten that people work to earn money. Supposing some of us don't marry—you don't expect them to be supported by their parents all their lives, do you? Or even if there is a husband, and he has decent wages, extra money won't hurt, will it?

A voice from the auditorium: "Why don't you imagine that you have all the money you want, that

you got an inheritance, for instance." (Prolonged laughter from the audience). "So then you just wouldn't work?"

Svetlana Nyrtsova: Who, me?.. No, I'd work just the same. Because, for one thing, I shouldn't want to be considered inferior to others.

Education

"All who have spoken here intend to go on with their education in universities, colleges and technical specialized schools. Is there anyone here who does not want to go on studying?"

Galya Malkova: But everyone intends to take up a profession. And this is impossible without studying.

Tanya Mustaikina: This isn't just a question of your profession. In our age it is simply impossible not to keep on enriching your knowledge. You have to keep abreast of new scientific and technical developments. Look at our parents. Most of them study: by correspondence, at evening classes to improve their qualification and in people's universities.

Alla Krasnopyorova: I would like not only to be a good specialist but also to be widely educated. Tanya says that we have to keep up with the latest scientific and technological knowledge. But it is just as important to know contemporary literature and art and to understand poetry, music and painting.

Larisa Kolomatskaya: Well I don't think it is necessary for everyone to know about everything. In our own school some are members of the literary circle, others attend music lectures, still others study art in the Young Pioneers' House.

Alla Krasnopyorova: You're speaking of those who are out to become proficient in a certain sphere of knowledge. But each cultured person must read books and listen to music.

Larisa Kolomatskaya: Why "each"? I for one don't understand music by Prokofiev and Shostakovich. And least of all I "must listen to it".

Alla Krasnopyorova: Do you like Tchaikovsky?

Larisa Kolomatskaya: That depends. His Piano Concerto No. I which you love so much doesn't move me in the least. But his song "I remember that magic moment" is really something. To be honest, though, I prefer light music.

Alla Krasnopyorova: You see, you're not indifferent to music. Simply we have different tastes. But wouldn't you like to understand the beauty of symphony music? Wouldn't you like to share the excitement of an art connoisseur? I'm sure you want to be an interesting person.

Social instinct

Olya Novoshinskaya: An interesting person is not always one who understands music and loves art. Knowledge by itself, without human qualities, means little. I personally value people who understand others. Do you know who impressed me most of all at our school meetings with interesting people? Not a famous poet or a popular artist, but an old factory foreman. He told us how youths often came to talk to him and not only about their work but if they had trouble at home, or had fallen out with their girls, or simply if they felt depressed. I envied the man. He had a knack for understanding other people's feelings, he was needed. And I thought then: this man has a family, children and

grandchildren. And yet he finds time for the young people at his plant, and spends hours after work with them. He probably has a highly developed social instinct.

Irina Arsentyeva: That was a fine way to put it: "social instinct". I believe this instinct is fostered in us by our YCL activities. This is my third year as Secretary of the school's YCL Committee. I'm also a member of the international "Friendship Club" in the Young Pioneers' House, and you know the work load we have in our last year at school. Mother often tries to insist that I drop my social work because of the time it takes up. I'm trying to convince her that it's interesting to meet guests from abroad, or to write to schoolchildren in other countries about your own country, or to organize a school meeting in defence of Chilean patriots, and to listen to everyone speaking out against injustice and defending freedom. I keep telling her that it's such a joy to see your comrades cannot remain indifferent to what is taking place in the world.

Alla Krasnopyorova: Social work is not meetings alone. I would like to go back to our talk on education. We have pupils who are making excellent progress. They are well-versed in literature and art and are good at sport. But often they share a desk with a backward pupil and don't even think of helping him out. In the educational sector of the YCL Committee, which I organize, we set ourselves the task of convincing pupils how good it is to share their knowledge with others. Remember Kostya S. who almost had to repeat a year? He was behind in five major subjects. And then five of the best in the class began to help him with his lessons. Kostya is now making good progress and is finishing school together with us.

Happiness

"What does one live for?"

The silence is suddenly broken as everyone starts speaking at once. Separate exclamations are heard: "For happiness, of course! Korolenko said that man was made to be happy, as a bird was made to fly"...

"And what is happiness?"

Tanya Musaikina: I think that happiness is impossible without love. If I meet a lad who will love me more than his own life...

Marina Romanovskaya: That's not enough! You also have to love him so that you won't need anyone else...

Lena Krivopust: Girls, you're talking of passion and not love. Loving means having common views, having things to talk about, and finding it interesting.

Tanya Mustaikina: That's not love, that's friendship.

Lena Krivopust: But can there be love without friendship? Such love will not bring happiness. To my mind love alone, even if it is very strong, will not bring happiness. When the Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet was living in the Soviet Union he once asked a young weaver of the Trekhgornaya Manufaktura Mill in Moscow what her greatest dream was. She replied: "To rush joyfully to my work each morning and to come back home in the evening with no less joy". A good family plus interesting work–that is what makes happiness!

Galya Sarana: You say a "good family" meaning, probably, only the husband and wife. But a family is first of all the children. Healthy, happy children, a beloved husband and work to one's liking–that is what one needs to be happy.

Olya Novoshinskaya: No, this is not enough. We must also know how to spend our leisure, we must have desire to see films, to go to the theatre and to concerts and to visit friends. And, of course, to do sport as well.

Galya Malkova: Happiness is impossible without true friends.

Tanya Mustaikina: Now wait a minute! You speak as if happiness is what surrounds us. If one has a dream and is steadily drawing closer to it...

Lena Krivopust: And if one knows that one is not alone, that he is helped in making his dream come true by friends, fellow workers or classmates, and even by strangers...

Lena Berezovskaya: And I think that man's greatest happiness is peace on earth. Mother often recalls the war, the air raids, houses in flames ... and I sometimes think: is it possible that all this can happen again? I believe that we, future mothers, can make the world forget wars.

Facts and Figures

In the Soviet Union there are 138,500,000 women, or 53.5 per cent of the population.

* * *

Over 93 per cent of Soviet women work or study.

As in all Soviet educational establishments, the conditions for entering vocational schools training skilled workers are the same for young men and women. There are more than 1,200 basic workers' trades of which only 975 are accessible to women. The others have been closed to women by state and TU organizations since they involve considerable physical strain harmful to women's health.

* * *

Young women account for 55 per cent of all pupils in specialized secondary schools and half of all students in further education.

* * *

The educational level of working men and women has become practically even. Out of every thousand gainfully employed, 781 women have a higher or secondary (full or incomplete) education, as compared with 779 men.

* * *

Women make up more than 51 per cent of all Soviet factory and office workers. The figure for industry is 49 per cent, agriculture 44 per cent, public health services, social welfare and physical culture 84 per cent, education 73 per cent, and culture 71 per cent.

* * *

Women account for 59 per cent of all specialists with a higher or secondary education. Every third woman is an engineer or lawyer; every second technician or designer is a woman; three out of every four Soviet doctors and teachers are women.

* * *

Over half a million women are shop-floor superintendants, building managers and managers of industrial enterprises or chairmen of state or collective farms.

* * *

Of the country's research workers, 40 per cent (over 497 thousand) are women.

* * *

A total of 475 women (nearly one third of the deputy body) are members of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the country's highest body of state authority. This exceeds the number of women in the parliaments of all the capitalist countries taken together. Of all deputies in the Supreme Soviets of Union and Autonomous Republics, women account for 35 and 39 per cent respectively. In the local Soviets 48 per cent of all deputies are women.

* * *

At the beginning of the century there were 800 women Communists in Russia. In 1920 their number increased to 45,000 and in 1940 it was short of half a million. The latest figures set the number at four million, or one-fourth of all Soviet Communists.

* * *

In the USSR motherhood is acknowledged as a social function. The law prevents managements of enterprises and institutions from turning down or dismissing women or reducing their wages on the grounds that they are expecting a child or are nursing mothers. The management is obliged to transfer expectant and nursing mothers to lighter jobs or to bring down their output rates, while retaining their average wages. Post-natal leave may be extended for up to a year. The woman's position at

work is held open and the time is included in her service record. In the 10th Five-Year Plan (1976-1980) partially-paid post-natal leave is to be introduced for up to one year (in addition to the maternity leave of 112 days on full pay).

* * *

In the Soviet Union mothers of large families receive one-time or monthly allowances. They also enjoy other benefits. For instance, if they have worked 15 years and not 20, women with five children can retire at 50 instead of 55.

* * *

The Soviet Union maintains a special network of services protecting mother and child. It includes clinics and consultation centres for women, children's polyclinics and out-patient departments (22,300 in all), sanatoriums and research institutions.

* * *

Some 13 million Soviet children attend full-time pre-school establishments. In the villages there are seasonal day-care centres which cater for 5 million children while their parents are busy in the fields. Pre-school establishments are accessible to all.

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Ada Baskina, a journalist and sociologist, is a member of the Soviet Sociologists' Association. Her sketches and comments are published in *Literaturnaya gazeta, Komsomolskaya pravda,* the *Yunost* magazine and other Soviet periodicals. Her major field of study is the place of women in the family and society, and family and marriage problems. Among her books, *A Mother's Talent, One Hundred and One Problems, or Marriage Viewed from Different Angles,* and *When Two are Responsible* have attracted a wide reading public. Ada Baskina is now an observer for the Novosti Press Agency.

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